

A Qualitative Study of How Rural Adolescents Experience Travel Abroad

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ABSTRACT

As the global market is becoming more competitive, one trend is evident—the need for increased development in the affective domain (Majid, Eapen, Aung, & Oo, 2019). American schools focus less on experiential opportunities and more on content driven instruction designed for performance testing (Pierre & Oughton, 2007; Robles, 2012). Therefore, affective learning stays dormant leaving a gap in the development needed outside of testing and without educational institutions teaching affective skills, many graduates are unable to handle adversity or empathize with diverse groups (Adams, 2012; Gale, 2017; Majid, et al., 2019; Robles, 2012; Sethi, 2016). Specifically, cultural competency is of high value in today’s economic landscape and failure to develop cultural competence carries negative consequences (Dean & East, 2019; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010).

Global travel is a transformative learning medium in which college students report growth within affective development and perceived changes in cultural competence (Alexander, Bakir, & Wickens, 2010; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Nunan, 2006). The adolescent learner is different from the adult learner in the areas of peer influence, brain development, and taking risks (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015; Steinburg, 2009; Scott, Duell, & Steinburg, 2018) but there is a lack of scholarship evaluating the experience of the adolescent within the global travel context (Dean & East, 2019; Weenink, 2008). I created a qualitative study to investigate the effect of a global travel experience on six adolescents, with a focus on their perceived cultural competency development.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband. Our covenant vows to each other contained the apostle Paul's words to "be devoted to one another in love" and to "honor one another above yourselves." You have honored me, my love. I adore you and am excited to see where the rest of life's journey takes us.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Appearing as a significant force around 2000, and with the intervention of increased technological innovations, globalization has become an increasingly persistent and unstoppable force in the world (Silver, Schumacher, & Mordecai, 2020). No longer is the global market defined by multi-national corporations, but rather globalization has trickled down into localized entities, thereby affecting people at a more individualized level (Silver, Schumacher, & Mordecai, 2020). Massive demographic shifts have occurred as patterns of migration and expansion of business have created a steady change in populations (Silver, Schumacher, & Mordecai, 2020). As nations, businesses, and individuals compete in the global market, one recurring trend is becoming increasingly evident—the need for increased development, specifically in the affective domain (Majid, Eapen, Aung, & Oo, 2019). Unfortunately, recent research findings indicate both students and employees are struggling to cope with the interpersonal skills needed to be successful in school and the workplace (Adams, 2012; Gale, 2017; Robles, 2012; & Sethi, 2016). As the world is ever-changing to accommodate globalization, it has become increasingly important to increase the supply of students with cultural competency to meet the demand set by business and post-graduate institutions (Dean & East, 2019; Nisha & Rajasekaran, 2018).

Without educational institutions at each level effectively teaching these skills, many graduates lack cultural competency and therefore are unable to handle adversity, make constructive decisions, or empathize with diverse groups (Adams, 2012; Gale,

2017; Markle & O'Banion, 2014; Robles, 2012; & Sethi, 2016). The development of many high demand skills occur in the affective domain of learning (Hoque, 2017; Krathwohl et al., 1964; Pierre & Oughton, 2007). Most educators understand the affective domain and how important it is, but there is a significant disconnect when it comes to teaching this domain effectively (Markle & O'Banion, 2014). The affective domain remains the hardest to teach – namely because measurements are difficult to create (Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Pierre & Oughton, 2007). Furthermore, another distraction from affective development is the increased performance pressure on standardized testing, encompassing concrete content, which focuses primarily on cognitive learning development (Theobald, 2009; Williams, 2017). Therefore, affective learning stays dormant leaving a gap in the development of skills needed to be successful in the world outside of standardized learning; skills like cultural competency (Majid, et al., 2019).

To address growing concerns of developing cultural competency through affective learning, global travel is becoming a trend among young adults to explore new locations around the globe, while simultaneously earning educational credit(s) (NAFSA, 2021). Researchers are finding the outcome to be worth a great deal more than just another experience to accumulate (Alexander, Bakir, & Wickens, 2010; Brown & Brown, 2013; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Kohlbry, 2016; Le, Raven, & Chen, 2013; Markman, 2013; Nunan, 2006; Ostermark, 2011; Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004; Williams, 2005). Many of these young adults are college aged students who reported perceived changes in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains

(Alexander, Bakir, & Wickens, 2010; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Le, Raven, & Chen, 2013; Markman, 2013; Nunan, 2006), perceived changes in cultural competence of home and host countries (Brown & Brown, 2013; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016; Kohlbry, 2016; Ostermark, 2011; Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013; Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004; Williams, 2005), and increased cultural intelligence (Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016; Valera & Gatlin-Watts, 2014) as a result of their global travel experience. Although global travel can be highly beneficial to a college aged student, there is lack of scholarship in global experiences among adolescent aged students.

The ability to compete in the global market, along with the development of global leaders, dictates the necessity for affective development at a much younger age (Weenink, 2008). Consistent demographic shifts, at the global and local level, push both businesses and governments to look for graduates with advanced cultural intelligence, along with the cultural competency to engage with diverse groups of peoples (Dean & East, 2019; Majid et al., 2019; Nisha & Rajasekaran, 2018). Becoming increasingly evident is the imperative that future generations of students are, at the very least, exposed to opportunities promoting cultural competency (Weekink, 2008). Therefore, educational institutions must begin to create realistic exposure to global travel opportunities as a means to potentially diminish identified skill deficiencies within the affective domain, such as cultural competency.

Statement of the Problem

Students are not provided enough opportunities for experiential, discovery-based learning (Roberts, 2012). Due to the testing culture within American schools, the focus is

less on experiential opportunities and more on content-driven instruction designed for performance testing (Pierre & Oughton, 2007; Roberts, 2012). Legislation such as “No Child Left Behind” has tied funding and educational jobs to standardized testing, which has inadvertently focused teachers’ attention on the cognitive domain, thereby leaving affective learning in a severe deficit (Pierre & Oughton, 2007). In effect, employers and university professors report employees and students as lacking in the skills needed for development and growth within industry and education (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Pierre & Oughton, 2007; NSSA, 2016; Robles, 2012). Many of these skills can be developed through teaching within the affective domain by affording students mediums in which they can explore their learning, particularly their personality development (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Pierre & Oughton, 2007).

Despite research findings on the value of the experiential study abroad learning opportunity on the adult learner, there has been little done to shed light on the value of global travel among adolescents (Duerden, M. D., Layland, E., Petriello, M., Stronza, A., Dunn, M., & Flora, S., 2018). Although there has been an increase in the number of adolescent travelers exploring travel abroad, there is a lack of research on the impact of travel on adolescents specifically. With the knowledge adolescents and young adults are developmentally different, an investigation on whether they engage with affective development differently as a result of global travel was needed. Some significant differences that exist between adolescents and adults include engaging in risk-taking behavior and the inherent influence of peer pressure (Mcmahon, 2015; Steinberg, 2009). Even Moshman (2011) and Bessant (2008), who argued against significant differences, believed adolescents maintain a greater developmental potential than adults,

and this development is partly dependent on opportunities. Due to the increase in demand for certain skills in the labor market and post-graduate education, there was a need to study what findings come from adolescents who are afforded the opportunity to engage in global travel (Robles, 2012). A study was needed to explore the affective development of participants for an indicator of increased cultural competency and a deeper understanding of diverse cultural groups. In particular, an understanding specifically of how rural adolescents reflected on their perceived development as a result of travel abroad was valuable in understanding their perception change of their home country compared to the host environment.

Despite the aforementioned research findings on college aged students, there has been little done to shed light on the value of global travel among adolescents. Although the number of adolescents engaging in global travel opportunities has increased (NTA, 2021), peer reviewed studies on global travel among adolescents are almost non-existent, illuminating a gap in the research.

Specifically, investigation regarding rural adolescents, their perceived development in the affective domain, and perceived changes in cultural competency is absent. Moreover, even domestic travel research has been limited to elementary aged students, undergraduate students, or professional apprenticeships rather than the adolescent aged student (Balci, 2010; Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Berte & Jones, 2014; Byrnes, 2001; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Garner & Gallo, 2005; Mills & Katzman, 2015; Ostermark, 2011; Strange & Gibson, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

Global travel provides adolescents with a rich opportunity to witness and emotionally engage with differences, which serve as resources for one's cultural development (Duerden, et al., 2018; Veverka, 2015). While research has been conducted on the experiences of college aged students and adults who have engaged in global travel, there is still an absence of literature highlighting the adolescent aged rural student and their experiences with global travel (Duerden, et al., 2018). The primary goal of this research was to understand what cultural access and competency adolescents had prior to their first global travel experience, how participants experienced global travel, and how the experience impacted their cultural competency as demonstrated through their movement within the five stages of affective hierarchy.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided my study:

RQ1. What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience?

RQ2. What aspects of the global travel experience contributed to shaping rural adolescents' cultural experience?

RQ3: How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence?

Conceptual Framework

Identifying cultural competency as a desired but lacking skill within the post-secondary marketplace led to seeking a catalyst for affective development within the realm of cultural competency. Therefore, Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning

Theory (TLT) and Krathwohl's Affective Learning Model (2002) guided the creation of research questions and then subsequently both interview questions and discussion prompts used to answer the research questions. Krathwohl's affective taxonomy and TLT further guided the interpretation of each participant's perceptions of changes in their affective development and cultural competence. There are ten stages of transformative learning (Figure 3) and five pillars of the affective taxonomy process (Figure 2): receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterization by a value or a value set (Krathwohl, 2002; Mezirow, 1991). A participant begins the process of transformation by engaging with a new experience that is either inherently transformative or uncomfortable in nature (Mezirow, 1991). Affective learning takes place when the participant can actively incorporate a new belief into a pre-existing set of beliefs (Krathwohl, 2002). Therefore, by engaging in a transformative learning experience, such as a first-time global travel experience, a participant can extensively reflect upon the experience to analyze their own knowledge construction (Mezirow; 1991). Further, by demonstrating movement through the affective hierarchy, one can analyze the extent of perceived changes within one's cultural competency by reflecting on the transformative experience of global travel.

In my study, I used Krathwohl's taxonomy to understand how learners identified factors assisting in affective learning and how travelers' perceived changes in cultural competency as a result of their global adolescent experience (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Adaption of Krathwohl's Affective Taxonomy (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

Pillars	Identifiable Elements of Engaging in Affective Development
RECEIVING	Willing to pay attention, awareness of a certain idea
↓	
RESPONDING	Idea one can commit in some way to the idea
↓	
VALUING	Ability to be perceived by others as holding value to an idea
↓	
ORGANIZING	Ability to relate the value to already held beliefs, integrating the value into existing belief system
↓	
CHARACTERIZING	Acting in a manner consistent with the newly internalized belief

Krathwohl (1964) described affective learning as the ability to possess behaviors that mandate large amounts of reflective capabilities. Seels and Glasgow (1990) discussed the affective taxonomy in relation to the concept of internalization. Internalization is acknowledged as the process by which a person's affect can change in reference to a particular object or phenomena (Seels & Glasgow, 1990). Krathwohl's (1964) model visualized above in Figure 1 embodies a five-pillar process with which affective change can occur and thereby a new internalization can manifest into changed personal behaviors. For this study, Krathwohl's process was used to identify variables that impacted participants' engagement with their global experience and also to

determine what level of cultural competency each participant was able to demonstrate based on their reflections.

Further, the study was grounded in the constructivist learning approach of transformative learning. In this study, I used Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory (see Figure 2) as a basis for understanding whether global travel could act as the catalyst for travelers to engage with a perplexing dilemma. As stated below, a perplexing dilemma is the first phase of TLT and the moment an individual can begin to reconstruct their affect towards an object or phenomena.

Figure 2

Adaption of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991).

10 Phases of TLT	Action
1	A perplexing dilemma
2	A self-reflection with feelings of guilt or shame
3	Analyze one's assumptions
4	Acknowledge these same changes happen in other people
5	Engage in various options for a new mindset
6	Plan a new action
7	Gain new skills
8	Temporarily attempt a new mindset
9	Build knowledge in new constructs
10	Fully engage the new frame of reference into one's life

Transformative learning can be defined as the process of perspective transformation, where the participant is interpreting and reinterpreting their experience to make meaning of the experience (Mezirow, 1991). This constructive learning method of reflection on an experience could provide insight into whether global travel is connected to affective domain development. Further, this analysis of participants' reflections could provide insight into whether perceived increases in cultural competency could occur as a result from the transformative learning approach of global travel. While not diminishing the development within the cognitive domain, the focus in this study was on the affective and how well an individual could self-reflect on the affective growth process for themselves through the transformative learning process. Reflecting on the meaning one derived from their global travel experience then further assisted in understanding whether the event precipitated a transformation in the participant's life.

Using Mezirow's (1991) learning theory and Krathwohl's (1964) affective hierarchy as a guide, I created questions for the interviews and the online focus groups. The questions developed were primarily designed to establish how each participant reflected on their access to childhood diversity, how they made sense of their global travel experience, and any perceived changes resulting from the experience. The transformative learning theory posits the need for extensive self-reflection after engaging with a particular phenomenon or event (Mezirow, 1991). Therefore, allowing the participants to engage with interview and focus group questions that were heavily reflective in nature assisted in revealing how each participant constructed meaning from their global travel experience (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2013).

Following is a chart reflecting the learning development related to global travel as an affective learning medium and its potential impact on the individual participant.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework for this Study.

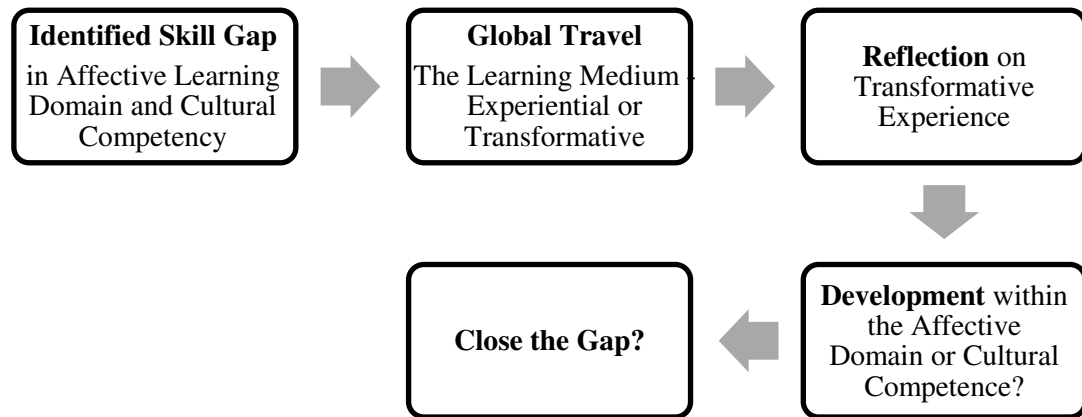


Figure 3 above is a sequential look at analyzing the potential ability of decreasing the lack of cultural competency, an identified skill gap, through global travel. The framework posited global travel as the transformative learning medium for adolescent affective development, similar to the development identified in the college-age learner. Extensive participant reflection on their global travel experience could then assist identifying whether affective development could result from the experience, potentially resulting in the demonstration of increased perceived cultural competency.

Research Design

I used a basic interpretive design (Creswell, 2009) to examine participants' cultural access and competency prior to their global travel experience, their reflection on the global experience, and the impact of the experience on their cultural competency.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the interpretive design allows the researcher to learn about how “individuals experience and interact with their social world” and the meaning it has for the individual. This design approach was appropriate for my study as the design accommodates for the belief in the construction of reality and interpretation of reality to change and move through time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Patton (2002) described the interpretative approach as an effort to grasp the uniqueness of a particular context in terms of how the participant understands their world and makes meaning of their experience. This design matched my desire as the researcher to focus on understanding the impact of global travel on an individual’s cultural competency from the perspective of the young adult reflecting on their first adolescent global travel experience.

In my study, I interviewed six young adults, all female, from two different rural towns in Southwest Georgia. Participants came from towns with a population of less than 50,000 people and a median household income of less than \$47,000. The young women participated in global travel during their adolescence through one of the two of the biggest travel companies used by adolescent travelers. The two companies used were Education First Tours and Explorica Tours. To evaluate the impact of global travel on each participant, I held three separate 90-minute interviews per participant (Seidman, 2013) and also incorporated a series of five online discussions. The discussion method was designed to afford an opportunity to exist in a group and determine whether the participants would elaborate or offer additional information in a setting different from the individual interviews. My study explored how travelers reflected on their adolescent travel experience, what perceived skills they initially lacked and what skills, if any, they

reported gaining and how they made meaning out of the experience upon reflection of the experience. In chapter three, I describe in detail the methods used in this research study.

Clarification of Terms

Cultural Competency. Various definitions have been asserted to attempt to verbalize the construct of cultural competence. There are also variations of the terminology including global citizenship, cross-cultural competence, and intercultural sensitivity among others. For this research paper, cultural competence will be used when discussing components of flexibility, awareness, stress management, cross-cultural awareness, and empathy. Cultural competence focuses on more than knowledge of other cultures, but rather involving one's skills and attitudes to interact successfully with people from diverse backgrounds (Deardorff, 2004).

Affective Learning Domain. This domain of learning deals with the manner in which one processes things emotionally. These include feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivations, and attitudes and are housed in five major categories from simple behaviors to more complex behaviors. The categories, or pillars, of affective learning are receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and the internalization of a characteristic in relation to an idea, material, or phenomenon (Krathzwohl, 1964).

Constructivist Theory. Constructivism is the theory a learner constructs knowledge within oneself. This is done through the process of individually and socially constructing meaning while one is learning. Therefore, a person builds their own knowledge and that accumulation of knowledge is determined by one's experiences as a learner and then the reflection on those experiences (Kretchmar, 2019, Narayan, Rodriquez, Araujo, Shaqlaih, & Moss, 2013).

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). The process of change within a given frame of reference. Frames of reference define one's world, based on an accumulation of experiences. Therefore-associations, feelings, values, conditioned responses, associations-can be changed through the process of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 1997; Cranton, 1994, 1996).

Adolescent. The beginning of adolescence happens with the onset of physiologically normal puberty and ends when adult behavior and identity are accepted. Typically, this period of one's life takes place between the ages of ten and 19.

Global Travel. The process of one traveling beyond the concrete borders of their home country to engage in a place outside of their home country. Typically, this process involves a passport or other documentation to be allowed to move between different locations.

Globalization. Governments in this new age must allow for citizens to gain access to, facilitate between and render liable the economic, political, and social processes and flows that delineate across and transform traditional community boundaries. This concept is a process of disconnection that has begun allowing political authority and forms of governance to diffuse (Held, 2000). The World Health Organization (2021) defined globalization as the inter-related elements of two major constructs: the opening of international borders to facilitate the increased flow of services, finance, people, ideas, and goods with the changes in institutions to help increase that flow. Generally accepted is the idea of the interdependence and interconnectedness of peoples and countries.

Summary

Chapter 1 included an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose statement, conceptual framework, research design, study significance, and clarification of key terms. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature surrounding the current state of global affairs and globalization, identified skill deficiencies in market needs of the workforce and educational institutions, core components of constructivist learning methods, differences between adolescents and adult learners, and content regarding the effects of travel-based learning. In Chapter 3, I present a comprehensive description and explanation of research design, methodology, data collection, and analysis of data. The findings of the study will be documented and explained in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I report the results, conclusion, and recommendations for future research based on the findings within this study.

Chapter II. Literature Review

As the world becomes increasingly globalized, an individual's ability to engage and interact in diverse settings among different cultural groups has become a needed skill (Deardorff, 2004, 2006). As such, businesses and educational institutions have identified major deficiencies in basic human relationship development and the ability to develop specific skills considered critical to business success (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniak, 2016). Human capital is deemed extremely critical to an organization's success, therefore both higher educational institutions and businesses prefer individuals who possess a quality blend of skills (Meeks, 2017; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010). Connell, Gough, McDonnell, and Burgess (2014) claimed this new world was one where technology constantly creates change within the workplace. Further, the workforce is constantly changing, as combinations of individuals range in age groups (Bailly & Lene, 2013). These generational forces have increased the demand for interpersonal skills among employees. Therefore, cultural competency is of especially high value in today's economic landscape (Dean & East, 2019). Failure to develop certain skills, in any learning medium, has negative long-term consequences for businesses in the overtly competitive global market (Dean & East, 2019; Mitchell, et al., 2010).

In the last two decades, both qualitative and quantitative research has been conducted to examine the impact of global travel on an individual, primarily focused on cognitive development (Alexander, Bakir, & Wickens, 2010, Le, et al., 2013). Further,

though there has been collection of data regarding global travel, the focus has not only on cognitive development but also on the young adult learner participating in college study abroad programs (Duerden, et al., 2018, Robles, 2012). The purpose of this study was to analyze global travel specifically among adolescents, identifying any changes in perception in their affective development, particularly within cultural competency.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of literature pertinent to this study. A discussion on the uniqueness of adolescence, the importance of affective development for future success, an understanding of adolescent development through a constructivist approach, and the potential benefits of global travel is offered in this review (Duerden, et al., 2018, Krathwohl, 2002). In the first section, I present literature that explores deficiencies and challenges to learning within affective development. In efforts to connect theoretical frameworks to the purpose of this study, I present a review of constructivist learning theory and the transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991). A discussion of how travel may be used as an affective teaching strategy and why global travel is important for those who engage in it is also presented. Further, an overview on the difference between an adolescent and a young adult is discussed.

Affective Development

A skill gap exists in the workforce and among higher educational institutions (Patascil & Tablatin, 2017). Skill gap was defined by Patascil and Tablatin (2017) as the difference between the current skills provided through education and the demand of those skills within the job market. The term “skills” suggest something can be learned, therefore, educational opportunities that promote and enhance the development of identified skill deficiencies play an important role in public policy, private industry, and

among all levels of educational institutions. Reflecting on global travel in adolescence can help identify whether cultural competency can be enhanced or attained through this medium and whether travel during adolescence is a learning method for which educational institutions should advocate. Certain skill deficiencies identified within the workforce suggest a lack of teaching methods focused on the ability to promote affective development. Of particular interest to this study was the perceived lack of skill development in the area of cultural competency (Dean & East, 2019).

Affective

When Bloom (1954) was working with Krathwohl to develop a learning taxonomy within the cognitive learning domain, Krathwohl (1964) was creating the model for learning in the affective domain. The affective domain is the learning domain involving one's feelings, emotions, and attitudes (Hoque, 2016). Krathwohl (1964) described affective learning as the ability to possess behaviors that require large amounts of reflective capabilities. Seels and Glasgow (1990) described Krathwohl's taxonomy as ordered based on the concept of internalization. Further, the understanding of internalization as the process where a person's affect can change towards a particular object. This change can manifest from a general awareness of an object to a position where the affect is "internalized" and thereby a person's behavior is guided or controlled by this new internalization or characterization.

Krathwohl (1964) created a model for affective change based on a five-pillar process. The five pillars include receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization by value set. Receiving is the awareness or sensitivity to certain material, ideas, phenomena and the ability to try to tolerate whatever the material, idea, or

phenomena is. Responding is the idea one can commit in some capacity to the material, idea, or phenomena. Valuing is possessing the ability to be perceived by others as holding value to certain materials, ideas, or phenomena. Organization is the ability to relate the given value to already held values and create internal harmony within the philosophy of the individual. Lastly, characterization is then acting in a manner consistent with the value one has newly internalized (Krathwohl et al., 1964). As one moves through the hierarchical process from receiving to characterization, one is engaging in more and more complex feelings, emotions, and attitude which makes one more committed, involved, and internally motivated (Hoque, 2016).

Miller (2005) discussed affective learning outcomes as involving motivations, values, and attitudes and further the way one expresses those outcomes includes statements of opinions, beliefs, or assessment of worth. Brett, Smith, Price, and Huitt (2003) elaborated on the affective domain housing emotions as well as the outward expression of the emotion one maintains toward a particular material, idea, or phenomena. Further, Brett et al., (2003) posited the affective domain embodied physiological, cognitive, and behavioral processes all related to emotion.

According to Pierre & Oughton (2007), the affective domain is the most overlooked of domains identified by Bloom and Krathwohl. The affective domain is the type of learning that reflects one's attitudes and willingness to participate in new endeavors and to make decisions about how we function and engage in differing circumstances (Pierre & Oughton, 2007). Due to the lack of educational initiatives regarding the development of the affective domain, certain skills remain in high shortage among students and employees (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; NSSA, 2016; Pierre &

Oughton, 2007; Robles, 2012). Such findings called for an in-depth analysis on whether global travel could be a transformative learning experience through development in the affective taxonomy among adolescents. Further, to evaluate whether participants could reflect on their perception of increased cultural competency towards other cultures and people groups as a result of exposure to new information.

Barriers to Learning in the Affective Domain

Pierre & Oughton (2007) suggested the affective domain is the true gateway to learning, however cognitive and kinesthetic learning dominate the current educational landscape. Further, there are few processes by which educators are able to demonstrate how they will teach or assess the affective domain. Societal and research constraints have been placed on measuring the affective domain as it deals with emotion and tone, and therefore has made it difficult to explore in teaching and learning (Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Pierre & Oughton, 2007). The emphasis sits with the push for minimal levels of concrete knowledge, a bar set by politicians through laws, one example evidenced in No Child Left Behind (Griffith & Nguyen, 2006). As teacher evaluations increasingly included student performance as effective measurement indicators, more and more teachers have left the affective domain dormant and by professional necessity focused on the cognitive taxonomy (Griffith & Nguyen, 2006). Additionally, teachers have found it difficult to teach affective as it is not only heavily reflective but based on emotions, a difficult construct to measure (Pierre & Oughton, 2007). A study done by Griffith and Nguyen (2006) measured seventy students in a teacher preparatory program and conducted a survey to evaluate feelings of preparation in addressing the affective

domain. Of the respondent teacher candidates, only thirty-nine percent stated they had time to actually teach the affective skills.

An analysis into how global travel impacted affective learning among rural adolescent participants was important to understanding different learning mediums in which educators could explore the affective process. Additionally, a study was needed to determine what type of exposure to different places, people, and cultures could move a person into a new dimension of appreciating and trying to understand diverse people and cultural groups.

Adolescents

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of global travel on rural adolescents, therefore, an understanding of the differences between adolescents and adults was important to establish. Adolescents are considered a unique group of individuals as age and development separates them from children, but also from adults. Even so, there has been little neuroscience research, until recently, to distinguish an adolescent from an adult, and further, to answer the question of when an adolescent becomes an adult (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015). Historically, society dictated this transition happened at the onset of financial stability, family formation, or attainment of formal education (Cohen, Bonnie, Taylor-Thompson, & Casey, 2016). Legally, however, this transition is much more difficult to define, as policy changes occur based on context of a given issue.

Eighteen has been determined the “age of majority” in most countries and therefore a large amount of adulthood lies with the premise age eighteen becomes the age of adulthood (Cohen, Bonnie, et al., 2016). However, the law is inconsistent-on one hand

an individual is restricted in access to items like alcohol-on the other access to contraceptives and abortions are becoming increasingly available to younger teenagers without parental consent (Cohen, Bonnie, et al., 2016; Scott, Reppucci, & Woolard, 1995). Therefore, the question must be asked, “at what age does an adolescent become an adult?” Unfortunately, due to continued changes in society and human behavior and the limited neuroscience research on adolescents, this becomes an extremely difficult question to answer. Even more difficult is the understanding of how to approach the adolescent developmentally from both the clinical and policy perspective (Altikulac, Lee, Veen, Bennedker, Krabbendam, & Atteveldt, 2018; Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015).

A counterargument in differences between adolescents and adults comes from Moshman (2011), where he asserted adolescents were not as different as from adults as commonly suggested. Moshman (2011) argued five major false beliefs have been assigned to adolescents, aged 13 to 20, about their behavior and the way society views them. The five fallacies Moshman (2011) listed are categorical misclassification, alleged irrationalities, false charges of immaturity, reductionism, and determinism. These five fallacies, as Moshman (2011) described are a disservice to this people group, as he posited “teenagers” are truly young adults, highly capable of operating as an adult. While Moshman (2011) agreed with adolescent experts (Burnett & Blakemore, 2009; McMahon, 2015; Steinburg, 2012) that brain development can be different; he argued adolescents are constructing their brains, not being driven by them, as other researchers charge. Therefore, Moshman (2011) believed teenagers were not irrational, but rather argued adolescents may actually have a greater propensity for development than older adults. Moshman (2011) argued as adolescents are exposed to more experiences and

activities, positive changes in the structure and function of the brain can occur. Whether or not one agrees with Moshman's (2011) unique stance, his argument that adolescents may hold greater potential for developmental growth suits this particular study well.

In contrast to Moshman (2011), Steinburg (2012) an internationally recognized expert on psychological development during adolescence, along with other scholars in the field (Beltz, 2018; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Cohen, Bonnie, et al., 2016; Cohen, Breiner, Steinburg, 2016; Grisso, 2003; Scott, Bonnie, & Steinburg, 2016; Scott, Duell & Steinburg, 2018) argued the adolescent brain was significantly different from an adult brain, using public policy and court rulings to support this contention. Steinburg (2012) argued during adolescence the brain system is still significantly developing, particularly in the area of self-regulation. Steinburg (2012) further posited adolescence is simply a time when one is not as mature as one will be in adulthood, as their brain is neither mature in structure nor function. Steinburg (2012) along with McMahon (2015) experimented with adolescents and each time, adolescents engaged in riskier behavior when with friends then when by themselves, indicative of issues with self-regulation.

Further, as mentioned above in regard to legal institutions, research findings have been used by policy makers to mitigate adolescent crime relative to adults, as they are viewed as less responsible than their older counterparts (Steinburg, 2012). Scott et al., (2016) argued strict legal punishments throughout the 1990s required more empirical brain research on adolescents to justify differences in punishments among the two age groups. The U. S. Supreme Court used new empirical research to increasingly deny harsh adult style sentences on juveniles. The reason for the reduced punishment between the two age groups was grounded in two major principles found by Scott et al., (2016).

The two reasons found were (1) due to developmental immaturity, juveniles typically are less culpable, and (2) since offenses occur as a by-product of immaturity, adolescents have a greater potential for reform. Further supportive of this contention, Scott et al., (2016) discussed the “age-crime curve” which charted the developmental course of criminal behavior through time and consistently documented age-linked patterns of offense. This curve indicated, across time, in regard to both violent and non-violent crime, criminal behavior increased over adolescence, peaked at age eighteen, and then began descent in the early twenties (Scott et al., 2016). This information is relevant to this research study because it highlights differences that exist between the two age groups. Further, because of aforementioned differences, evaluating how adolescents experience global travel is valuable in comparison to their older counterparts. Additionally, if adolescents are more prone to reform, then understanding whether increased cultural competency can occur from the global experience is invaluable to potentially moving through the affective learning process quicker.

Risk-taking behavior is a major difference found between the adolescent and the adult (Beltz, 2018; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Cohen, Bonnie, Taylor-Thompson, & Casey, 2016; Cohen, Breiner, Steinburg, 2016; Grisso, 2003; Scott, Bonnie, & Steinburg, 2016; Scott, Duell, Steinburg, 2018). Scott, Breiner, et al., (2016) described this time period in an adolescent’s life as a period of hormonal changes surrounding puberty, in which increased activity occurs in the brain’s reward pathway, but the development of the brain to regulate self-control is lagging. Therefore, a time of vulnerability to risk-taking behaviors emerges until the brain can reconcile the two systems (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Scott, Breiner, et al., 2016; Scott, et al., 2018).

Also, imperative to note, is the regulation of behavior in association to variant emotional interactions. For instance, the prefrontal cortex is a critical player in advanced thinking, self-regulation, reward/risk behaviors, and coordination of emotion and cognition (Scott et al., 2016). In the 1960s and 1970s, studies were finally allowed on post-mortem brains (of which children and adolescent brains were in shorter supply) and researchers found the prefrontal cortex continued to progress well past early childhood (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). The prefrontal cortex involves synaptic pruning, myelination, and improved structural and functional connectivity - all processes developing within adolescence - but not all completed at the same age (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Cohen, Bonnie, et al., 2016). The two major changes identified from research of the brain before and after puberty were myelin development supporting transmission speed of neural information in the frontal cortex and reorganization of synaptic density in the prefrontal cortex which assists heavily in categorization development (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). Although this research study is focused on affective learning, understanding adolescent brain development occurs at different rates is valuable to interpreting reasons behind variant responses to their global travel experience.

Further, the way in which an adolescent's brain governs thinking that takes place under ideal conditions is not dissimilar to an adult. However, the same brain's maturity in dealing with situations that occur under emotional or social arousal takes significantly longer (Cohen, Breiner, al., 2016; Scott et al., 2016). Therefore, social and emotional environments for learning could potentially offer increased development among the adolescent brain, when offered in a semi-controlled environment. Scott, et al., (2016)

explained this behavior as a particular sensitivity to external social stimuli, an ease with emotional arousal, and the inherent struggle to regulate strong emotions. In short, a social environment in which an adolescent finds oneself, can play a major role in a teenager's propensity to engage in risk-taking behaviors - whether good or bad (Scott et al., 2016). In regard to this study, understanding how adolescents responded to variant social stimuli was relevant due to the nature of global travel. Immersing oneself in the entirely new social and emotional circumstances of global travel provided a lens to explore adolescent behavior. In short, what interactions stood out among adolescent participants while engaging in their first global travel experience? Research among young adults and global travel has been explored, however, a need to understand the adolescent's ability to reflect on perceived changes within themselves as a result of a global experience was needed. This depth of understanding provides insight into how adolescents see and make meaning of the world around them. Additionally, can adolescents change their attitudes toward diverse people groups as a result of immersion in the global travel experience?

Further yet, another noted difference is adolescents tend to structure responses to perceived expectations of authority figures (Grisso, 2003). A study by Grisso (2003) sought to compare adolescent and young adults in the criminal justice system by having participants complete a standardized measurement of abilities relevant to seek competence to stand trial. Grisso (2003) employed 1,393 participants throughout four locations across the United States. Grisso (2003) found adolescents inclined to make choices associated to trial decisions based on compliance to authority, as well as effects of psychosocial immaturity, when compared to the young adult counterparts. The design

of this study takes into account this issue by using a population of participants that were young adults reflecting on their global experience taken during adolescence. Studying adolescents immediately after their travel experience creates two potential issues: (1) not enough time has lapsed to truly see movement through all levels of affective development and (2) adolescents could mold reflective answers to how they perceive the researcher wants them to respond. Therefore, this study accommodates for both of those limitations, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Romer, Reyna, & Satterthwaite (2017) discussed the importance differentiating sensation seeking behavior stemming from exploration of an environment under vague risk context and impulsive action stemming from weak control over limbic motivation. Romer et al., (2017) further proposed learning models that recognized adaptive roles of cognition and experience play in an adolescent development provide a more holistic image of this period of development. Therefore, they suggested a learning model highlighting the importance of experience gained through exploration (Romer, et al., 2017). Guyer, Silk, & Nelson (2017) suggested the affective adolescent life is full of emotional complexities on the inside (hormonal changes and the neural network managing emotions) and the outside (dramatic and dynamic shifts in social relationships). Therefore, Guyer, Silk, & Nelson (2017) stated it was critical advancements in affective behavior development were made to more fully understand what can help develop or hinder that adolescent behavior. The purpose of this study is to shed light on whether a global travel experience during adolescence can contribute to increased levels of cultural competency by movement through the affective process. If increased levels of affective development are found as a result of this experience, the impact of this research could be

profound in better understanding what moments are important to create among adolescents.

Throughout this section, I established relevant differences that differentiate adolescents from other age groups. Differences discussed included self-regulation, affective development, developmental maturity levels, risk-taking behaviors, ability to reform quickly, brain development through time, and emotional exploration. The differences identified suggest adolescents could experience travel abroad differently than other age groups. The purpose of this study was to analyze the adolescent experience of global travel and whether upon reflection, participants can identify perceived increased cultural competency due to the social and emotional experience.

Constructivism

This study sought to find how each participant generated meaning of their experience with global travel. The theoretical framework for this study was grounded in transformative learning theory (TLT), a constructivist theory. Constructivist theory posits an individual can make, or construct, meaning from their experiences in life, therefore translating those experiences into learning (Bereiter, 1994; Olusegun, 2015). The foundation of constructivist theory was built on concepts within sociology, education, psychology, and philosophy (Olusegun, 2015). The fathers of constructivism are commonly acknowledged as Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Neisser, and Dewey, each one a pundit within their field of expertise. As each of these pioneers observed and studied how people learned, one key commonality was theorized – the premise learning is the result of mental construction. One must reconcile new encounters with previously held beliefs or attitudes, thereby changing one’s beliefs to accommodate new information or

reject the new information as irrelevant (Olusegun, 2015). Global travel is an experience where one comes in constant contact with challenges to existing belief structures, therefore the opportunity for one to construct meaning for themselves was presented. Further, affective learning requires the participant to readjust their attitude and subsequent behavior towards diversity as a result of new information yielded. This study molds both affective development through the constructivist approach well.

Constructivism houses two important concepts: (1) new knowledge adjustment within a schema is limited to the influence of prior knowledge, and (2) learning is an active process (Narayan, et al., 2013). A learner is constantly constructing meaning from experiences and understanding. Further, a constructivist approach is intended to develop a learner's inquiry skills through reflective thinking, refine a learner's knowledge, and assist with developing opinions about the world that exists in the realm of the learner (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Shah, 2019). A learner can effectively dismiss the introduction of new knowledge if it does not fit into one's current schema, or a learner can accommodate the new information by modifying an existing schema. Therefore, the learner is essentially creating a reality dependent on one's individual experiences, exposure to new learning, and the ability to self-reflect to adjust for a new object, material, idea, or phenomena (Bereiter, 1994, Narayan, et al., 2013; Olusegun, 2015). This theory was appropriate for this study because global travel immediately requires a participant to either integrate or reject some new information into their existing schema.

Piaget, an epistemologist, studied the process of coming to know and further, the stages with which one moves through as one attains the ability to process knowledge (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Piaget's purported cognitive learning takes place in stages in

which each stage builds on the preceding one. The four major stages include the sensorimotor stage (0-2), the preoperational stage (2-7), the concrete operational stage (7-12), and the formal operational stage (12 years and beyond). Each stage occurs roughly within the ages determined here. In the first of the four stages, the sensorimotor stage, an infant is operating within a primarily physical existence whereas the infant is discovering their schema and builds their reality. This stage signals the next when the child moves into constructing the reality of object permanence (DeWolfe, 2019; Lefa, 2014). Next, the learner moves into the preoperational stage, in which a learner has moved into an egocentric view of oneself and can further reason and maintain a logical train of thought. While still operating within the realm of the physical, the learner is able to absorb variant points of view (DeWolfe, 2019; Lefa, 2014). The third stage, the concrete operational stage, moves a learner into a logical thinking process based on concrete evidence. The learner now is able to use past experience and concrete evidence to introduce a realistic solution to a problem. Moreover, in this stage the fundamental skill becomes categorization and the ability to understand a different perspective. In this stage the learner moves away from an egocentric view (DeWolfe, 2019; Lefa, 2014). Last, the formal operations stage, meets the learner in early adolescence, where the ability to process possibilities, solve problems, and think abstractly are purely speculative. The learner is thinking in both abstract and logic, and the social component is important. This stage allows the learner to engage in discourse about high-level evaluative components by analyzing every local possibility of interaction among the problem and solution (DeWolfe, 2019; Lefa, 2014).

In Piaget's stages of cognitive development, no stage should be rushed, as each stage is assisted by balancing the processes of both assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is where new information is embedded into an existing cognitive scheme and accommodation is when an existing scheme is changed to accommodate new information (Piaget, 1964). Therefore, essentially the stages promote the constructing of one's own learning based on prior experience and exposure.

A meta-analysis study of 53 research studies done by Ayaz & Sekerci (2015) sought to explore the effect of a constructivist approach to student achievement compared to a traditional approach. Out of the 53 studies analyzed, 50 had a positive effect on student achievement while using the constructivist model for learning. Further, when analyzed according to educational level, high school and college age students had the greatest benefit for using the constructivist approach (Ayaz & Sekerci, 2015).

In industrialized societies, only 35% of high school graduates reach the formal operation stage of Piaget's states of cognitive development (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). For those students who are entering the workforce immediately upon graduation, it was necessary to explore whether global travel could be a precipitator event to guide the construction of new knowledge into existing schema at a level where students could move more into a formal operational stage. Although the purpose of this study is to investigate affective growth, it is valuable to understand cognitive growth due to the nature of development. Many times, growth in one domain overlaps growth in another domain. Therefore, understanding that growth in both the affective and cognitive is a process of development is valuable to understanding the importance of this study and the potential impact on education.

Transformative Learning Theory

Under the umbrella of constructivism lie different learning methods. One of those methods is transformative learning theory (TLT). TLT is a form of learning that adopts a constructivist approach to the process of learning. Specifically, Mezirow (1997) defined transformative learning theory as the process of creating change in one's frame of reference. Mezirow (1997) stated,

A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience. For some, any uncritically assimilated explanation by an authority figure will suffice. But in contemporary societies we must learn to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgements, and feelings of others. Facilitating such understanding is the cardinal goal of adult education. Transformative learning develops autonomous thinking (p. 5).

In order to create a change in one's frame of reference, Mezirow (1997) posited one must be willing to explore uncomfortable situations and discourse. Further, Mezirow (1997) stated individuals hold frames of references that define their world and these frames then shape feelings, perceptions, and expectations. While it is not necessary to envelop feelings of guilt or shame within a given mindset to experience transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997), the need arises to analyze this type of transformative learning. When dealing with global travel, one of the major elements of restructuring one's frame of reference revolves around ethnocentrism. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, and the desire to explore whether changes regarding cultural competency can evolve for an adolescent through global travel, the researcher allowed the use of these particular negative emotions. Global travel was analyzed through the lens of a potential

transformative learning experience where rural adolescents interacted with global diversity, forcing either reinforcement of existing attitudes or adopting new attitudes towards diversity.

Mezirow (1997) argued a frame of reference included two dimensions: habits of mind and a point of view. Where habits of mind are abstract ways of thinking, feeling, and acting motivated by a strict set of codes, a point of view is built from these habits. Empirical tests are difficult to engage communicative learning, as it involves the understanding of beliefs, feelings, values, and purposes – all difficult constructs to measure (Mezirow, 1997). Therefore, learners must learn how to reflect critically on one's assumptions underlying those constructs. If one can then critically reflect on those assumptions, then one can transform one's frame of reference. Mezirow (1997) stated once one can appropriately self-reflect through objective or subjective reframing, personal transformation can occur within an individual. Mezirow (1997, 2003) proposed this happens through a four stages process of learning (1) to elaborate an existing point of view, (2) establish new points of view, (3) transform a point of view, and (4) become critically aware of one's generalized bias. Mezirow (1997, 2003) further argued an individual will struggle to get to the fourth stage of learning because one's natural comfort with only allowing learning to occur within our existing frame of reference. Therefore, one has to have access to uncomfortable learning situations throughout one's life to explore transforming one's underlying assumptions. The ability to change one's frame of reference offers the opportunity to build skills that include problem solving, communication, organization, and teamwork. Further, this process can guide one to become an agent of change, be self-reflective, and more inclusive. Once a change

happens to a frame of reference, one should expect to see a change in behavior. Global travel could be used as a transformative learning experience in which a willingness for exposure to new and uncomfortable situations is available. Understanding how one constructs meaning through the transformational landscape as a result of this level of exposure was a goal of this study. Further, analyzing whether participants believed they reconstructed their attitudes towards diversity was another focus of the research.

In his 1991 work, Mezirow stated immersing oneself in an uncomfortable situation, actively learning within the given situation, and then self-reflecting the situation is the way one can develop a holistic understanding of the world and of oneself. Mezirow (1991) further posited altering one's meaning structure-culturally developed subconscious viewpoints that build our frame of reference-can lead to transformative learning. This change can only occur through a ten-stage process of (1) undergoing a perplexing dilemma; (2) ability to self-reflect and feel guilt or shame regarding one's mindset; (3) analyze one's assumptions; (4) acknowledge these changes occur in other people; (5) engage in various options for a new mindset; (6) plan a new action; (7) gain new skills; (8) temporarily attempt a new mindset; (9) build knowledge in new constructs; and (10) fully engage the new frame of reference into one's life (Mezirow, 1991).

Mezirow's (1991) TLT was a theoretical framework for Stone and Duffy (2015) to administer a systematic review of TLT through completing an analysis of articles linking TLT to travel as a facilitator for learning. Stone and Duffy (2015) searched over 3,966 articles, narrowed to 53 total, after a robust screening process. The researchers found a high connection of TLT to study abroad programs (39 articles), TLT as a

framework to study travel abroad experiences, or TLT as experiential learning pedagogies with an international service-learning focus. Further, Stone and Duffy (2015) concluded there was a strong need for continued research within the travel and tourism field pertaining specifically to transformative learning. A goal of this study was to analyze how adolescent's experienced global travel and whether, upon reflection, they felt global travel was a transformative experience in their lives and how they reconstructed their world as a result of their experience.

Experiential Learning Theory

Another medium of constructivism is experiential learning theory (ELT), in which experiences shape learning, re-learning, and encompass the creation of knowledge. Much like TLT, ELT allows the participant to draw on an experience to create learning (Kolb, 1984). Due to global travel being experiential in nature, understanding ELT is important to this study.

In *Experience and Nature*, John Dewey (1925) wrote,

...the ways in which we believe and expect have a tremendous effect on what we believe and expect. We have discovered at last that these ways are set, almost abjectly so, by social factors, by tradition and the influence of education. Thus, we discover that we believe many things not because the things are so but because we have become habituated through the weight of authority, by imitation, prestige, institution, and unconscious effect of language, etc. We learn, in short, that qualities which we attribute to objects ought to be imputed to our ways of experiencing them, and that these in turn are due to the force of intercourse and

custom. This discovery marks an emancipation; it purifies and remakes the objects of our direct or primary experience (p. 23).

Drawing on twentieth century educational scholars (Dewey, Lewin, Piaget) who focused heavily on experience as a central key regarding learning and development, experiential learning theory (ELT) was created as a holistic model of the process of learning based on the constructivist concept (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). David Kolb (1984, p.38) defined ELT as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience.” ELT is driven by the idea one can resolve both the action/reflection and experience/abstraction dialectics within an individual. There are six key elements to ELT, all integrated by shared similarities among the foundational experiential learning scholars. The six elements are (1) learning is a process, not an outcome, (2) all learning is re-learning, (3) learning requires conflict resolution within an individual based on exposure to new material, (4) learning encompasses the totality of an individual and requires adaption, (5) learning is a result from exchanges between the individual and the environment, and (6) learning is a process where one creates knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). L.S. Vygotsky, a Russian cognitive theorist, stated learning through experience is where the process for human development can occur (Kolb, 1984). Vygotsky’s premise is the developmental focus of Kolb’s experiential learning theory.

Further, ELT is a four-stage process involving adaptive learning modes. These modes include (1) concrete experience, (2) reflective observation, (3) abstract conceptualization, and (4) active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). The concrete experience/abstract and the active experimentation/reflective are dimensions, each

distinctly representing two dialectically contrasting adaptive alignments (Kolb, 1984). According to Kolb (1984), an individual's learning process is embedded in the transactions among the four modes and the manner of how the dialectics meet resolution. Kolb (1984) argued prehension embodied abstract/concrete dialectic, which represented two different procedures for grasping an experience, either through comprehension (one's dependence on conceptual interpretation or symbolic representation) or through apprehension (one's dependence on tangible qualities of experience). The active/reflective dialectic is transformative, representing two ways of transforming the figurative representation of experience. Further, Kolb (1984) stated this transformative experience happened either through one internally reflecting, called intention, or through externally manipulating the external world, called extension. Moreover, the two layers of learning Kolb (1984) discussed (prehension and transformation) match directly to Piaget's (1964) aspects of thought.

Kolb (1984) discussed the building blocks for knowledge as divergent, assimilative, convergent, and accommodative. Kolb (1984) stated these foundations become the medium for which higher levels of knowing can be attained. Further, Kolb (1984) argued perception of an experience was not sufficient for learning, nor was simply a transformation alone, but a learner required both a grasp of figurative representation of an experience and also some transformation of the representation. To develop learning through the experiential learning process, one must integrate the four learning modes. This integration of the learning modes results in higher-order sentiments, observations, concepts, and actions (Kolb, 1984). Development in one mode will lead to growth in others, and development on each dimension progresses from a sense of defensiveness,

dependence, embeddedness, and reaction to a sense of independence, pro-action, self-direction, and self-actualization (Kolb, 1984).

ELT is a medium in which an experience is the root of the creation of knowledge. Global travel offers participants an opportune experience to create new knowledge. The purpose of this study was to find what meaning the participants perceived through their experience of global travel. ELT is another framework through which a participant could construct their own knowledge from their experience.

Field Trips as Learning Experiences

John Dewey (1910), a pioneer for inquiry-based learning, stated education is life. Cengelci (2013) interviewed 15 teachers and found field trips were valued as a method for inquiry-based, or experiential learning, also supported by Balci's (2010) findings of teacher candidates view of field trips as a concrete way for students to move from theoretical to practical understanding. In a study done by Berte and Jones (2014), choosing from a list of several different teaching strategies, even students concluded field trips were the most beneficial to learning. Scarce (1997) supported this contention by accumulating qualitative data within sociology courses. Scarce (1997) found although students lacked access or opportunity to attend field trips, when students did attend a field trip, the content was more meaningful than in the traditional setting. Farmer, Knapp, and Benton (2007) suggested field trips also support long-term retention of knowledge, with specific detail. Greene, Kisida, and Bowen (2014) did a large-scale, random assignment experiment on tolerance, historical empathy, critical thinking, and recall of facts. Greene et al. (2014) found participants measured growth on all four measures as a result of only a half-day field trip. Historical empathy and acceptance increased as a result of field trips

in research done by Veverka (2015). Not only does research support field trips adding to cognitive development but also to affective learning. Mills & Katzman (2015) assigned 151 elementary students in fifth grade to two different groups - one group attended field trips with an opportunity to meet scientists, and the other group did not. Mills & Katzman (2015) found students who were able to go on the field trip expressed greater interest in the subject of science, and further found students who were able to interact with the scientists had a higher desire to become a scientist in the future, indicating changes in attitudes toward the profession of scientists.

Higgins, Dewhurst, and Watkins (2012) discovered field trips were beneficial for post-secondary institutions to use as observational techniques for different apprenticeships or internships. Berte and Jones (2014) concluded post-secondary students needed to observe and experience phenomena in the real-world setting, as it is vital to their own future success in the workplace. These observations can also be done at lower levels, as seen in the 2014 study done by Mitchell, where kindergarten through high school students shadowed water and sewer departments country wide. Results indicated, through these trips, students were able to transfer learned content information to a real-world setting. Houser, Brannstrom, Quiring, and Lemmons (2011) found field trips move from sightseeing adventures to problem fieldwork, allowing students to garner a variety of new skills. Rohlf (2015) further concluded field trips may offer a long-term impact on students, especially when students are allowed to move at their own pace and analyze materials of personal interest. Garner & Gallo (2005) conducted a study on 67 undergraduate students to examine the effect of virtual and physical field trips on student achievement. Garner & Gallo (2005) did not determine a significant difference between

the two field trips based on student achievement. However, since the focus was mainly cognitive development based on an assessment, further research would need to be done to see affective responses to the two variants of trips. Field trips provide students with learning experiences not accessible in the traditional setting (Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Markman, 2013). Field trips are learning opportunities that can afford adolescents exposure to new and uncomfortable situations to construct new attitudes towards different variables. These aforementioned studies heavily focused on cognitive recall and transfer rather than affective development. The goal of my study was to investigate the affective process of learning through the learning experience of global travel.

Barriers to Implementing Trips as Transformative Learning Experiences

Although research has shown field trips are a beneficial learning strategy (Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Houser, et al., 2011; Markman, 2013; Rohlf, 2015), there are several barriers identified in the literature. First, there is the issue of field trips being partially or completely cut due to funding (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Cengelci, 2013; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Greene et al., 2014; Higgins et al., 2012; Wheeler, 2011). Next, there is the concern field trips are moving to more rewards-based trips rather than educational based explorations (Green et al., 2014). Reward based travel is concerning for teachers who would like to use funds on educational travel. Teachers are the most valuable resource when planning and executing a field trip (Balci, 2010; Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Berte & Jones, 2014; Cengelci, 2013; Coughlin, 2010; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Nabors, Edwards, & Murray, 2009; Rohlf, 2015; Trimble, 2015; Veverka, 2015). Therefore, due to findings indicative of the

exhaustive nature of planning a field trip, it is imperative for field trip leaders to analyze literature to implement a successful trip. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) suggested higher education institutions should develop teacher preparation courses dealing with the implementation of successful field trips within a particular content domain. Other tips offered through the literature were academic preparation (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Trimble, 2015), goals set for different time intervals (Cengelci, 2013), collaboration between the teacher, locations, and school district to create lessons for field trip objectives (Coughlin, 2010), relationship development between the teacher and the student to promote learning (Nabors et al., 2009), and careful selection of appropriate chaperones to limit liability issues (Wheeler, 2011). Due to the barriers indicated, a qualitative study was justified to analyze whether global travel experiences should be advocated for among teachers and districts as a means for transformative learning and the rendering of life skills.

Global Travel – The Study Abroad Among Young Adults

Questions arise when analyzing whether global learning experiences can be transformative in nature and if time spent in a given location is detrimental to determine change within a participant. Researchers have indicated several positive outcomes occur as a result from one particular global learning experience, the study abroad (Alexander, Bakir, & Wickens, 2010; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Le, Raven, & Chen, 2013; Markman, 2013; Nunan, 2006; Strange & Gibson, 2017). Researchers analyzing the study abroad experience have currently only conducted studies at the college level analyzing the young adult learner. Positive results are seen from the global experience through an increase in the cognitive, affective, and

behavioral domains among participants (Alexander et al., 2010; Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Houser et al., 2011; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Le et al., 2013; Markman, 2013; Nunan, 2006; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). Furthermore, a participant's engagement in the study abroad experience has shown to increase self-confidence (Alexander et al., 2010; Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Nunan, 2006). Over the last several decades, researchers have indicated the study abroad to be an effective experience for achieving growth in all three educational domains among college students, therefore a study on adolescents was needed to see if similar results were found. The lack of research among adolescents and their experience with global travel, couple with identified differences between the adolescent and the college age learner, warranted this study to explore what type of impact a global travel experience has on the adolescent learner.

Global Travel Experience – Positive Outcomes

Due to the nature of a global learning experience, it is important to evaluate changes to a participant's cultural competence. Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, and McMillen (2009) determined aspects of cultural competency students might acquire through a global learning experience as: knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs enabling one to work with, respond to, and support people in different cultural settings. Furthermore, Clarke et al. (2009) included intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and openness to diversity and diverse groups of people. Specifically, cultural competency is a learned set of skills that give an individual the ability to constructively interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

Cultural Competency. Cheiffo and Griffiths (2004) studied 2,300 students over a two-year time frame and found participants who engaged in travel experiences increased their cultural competency, personal growth, and functional knowledge in comparison to campus groups. In a 2013 study done by Zimmerman and Neyer, German college students who participated in a travel experience were compared to control students to see if personality changes occurred through a survey. Zimmerman and Neyer (2013) found the travel group indicated higher levels of all aspects of the survey including (a) extraversion, (b) conscientiousness, (c) openness to experience, (d) agreeableness, and (e) emotional stability. Nunan (2006) surveyed 233 students who participated over a ten-year period and found common influences of the travel experience. Changes identified included a more sophisticated view of the world, interest in other cultures, lifelong learning, overall employability, increased creativity, and problem-solving skills. It is of importance to note Kohlbray's (2016) study indicated the older the participant, the stronger correlation to cultural competency.

Length of trip also appeared in the literature with Ingraham and Peterson's (2004) study of 1,104 participants from 295 programs in 40 countries, where findings indicated regardless of program length, participant's cultural competency increased. Le et al. (2013) found in a span of two weeks, participants could alter their mindset about differing cultures, attesting to the idea the travel experience is not necessarily limited by time. Kohlbray's (2016) study also supports this contention, as student's trips varied from one day to three weeks, but all participants increased cultural competency in multiple areas. A purpose of my qualitative study was to explore what moments, experiences, or interactions participants perceived to have changed their attitudes, beliefs, or pre-existing

constructs towards different cultures as a result of the travel. Therefore, this study was able to reveal whether or not adolescents demonstrated changes in cultural competency based on movement through the affective hierarchy.

Cognitive Development. Of the literature reviewed, an increase in the cognitive domain can result from a study abroad (Alexander et al., 2010; Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Cheiffo & Griffiths, 2004; Feldburg, 2016; Houser et al., 2011; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Le et al., 2013; Markman, 2013; Nunan, 2006; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). The cognitive domain deals with the ability to retain facts and interpret cultural practices. Therefore, participants who increase their cognitive domain create a framework that allows them to make sense of their surroundings (Cengelci, 2013; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Houser et al., 2011). Houser et al. (2011) found study abroad programs not only improve test performance, through enhancing cognition, but also found participants increased their engagement with the content studied because the student was able to understand the context of the content. However, Nabors et al. (2009) found that while evidence supported the cognitive and affective domains were impacted as a result of a travel experience, it was difficult to examine to what extent the learning occurs. Although research discussed from this section primarily highlights cognitive growth, affective growth is also discussed by researchers. Therefore, a study was needed to evaluate what factors influence affective development and further to what extent do changes take place among participants regarding affective growth.

Motivational Development. According to Varela and Gatlin-Watts (2014), the motivational domain addresses the inclination to engage and explore cultural differences. Ryan and Deci (2000) stated motivation is being moved to do something, as

someone who is activated to an end. This includes self-efficacy and expectancy, meaning participants high in the motivational domain will actively seek information guiding a deeper understanding of cultural differences, have higher tolerance levels, and challenge their comfort boundaries (Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016; Kohlbury, 2016; Markman, 2013; Stebleton et al., 2013; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). It should be noted that Holtbrugge and Engelhard (2016) found students with high intrinsic motivation engaged in cultural boundary spanning during their travel programs, further supporting intrinsic motivation and self-determination are important for cultural crossing activity and competence.

Intrinsic motivation is discussed as the “free choice” measure, which looks at whether the participant will continue engaging in the activity after any extrinsic motivation is removed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This contention is supported through Salyers, Carston, Dean, and London’s (2015) work that found travel participants sought a “hands-on” experience and cultural knowledge as motivators for engaging in the experience. There are two elements of this section relevant to this study. First, understanding whether motivation is a variable found in the original decision to engage in adolescent travel is important for understanding what type of student may engage with a global travel experience. Second, understanding whether participants could reflect on whether they found intrinsic value associated with global travel as a motivating factor to engage with diversity was another aspect of this study.

Behavioral Development. The behavioral domain deals with adaption, where the participant engages in culturally appropriate behaviors and understands social repercussions of an individual’s action. This is perhaps the most sophisticated facet to

cultural competency, as it implies that someone engaging in behavioral adaptation is aware of cultural differences. Furthermore, it implies the participant is willing to create cultural contacts and is able to understand gaps that exist across cultures (Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). A study done by Williams (2005) of 50 college students, of which 25 participated in travel experience and 25 participated in traditional setting, found travel participants were more likely to increase their cross-cultural communication awareness. Williams (2005) also found travel participants increased their ethnorelativism at higher rates than their traditional counterparts. The last stage of the affective process is analyzing behavioral changes among participants to determine integration of an attitudinal mindset shift towards diversity. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, understanding behavioral changes unique to global travel is important for life-long skill development and lasting cultural competency.

Self-confidence. Self-confidence was another major theme that emerged in the literature as a positive outcome of global travel experiences. Ostermark (2011) interviewed two Finnish student teachers upon their re-entry from Britain, in which one major impact of the experience by both participants, was increased self-confidence. Nunan's (2006) study also reported increased self-confidence, an aspect of personal and social development. Furthermore, findings indicated personal growth, including self-confidence and independence, increased among participants in Ingraham and Peterson's 2004 study. Increased self-confidence is considered an indicator of a successful foreign travel experience (Alexander et al., 2010; Feldberg, 2016; Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). A goal of this study was to discover what skills, if any, participants reported from their experience with global travel. As

indicated above, several skills have been identified as effects of global travel on the young adult/adult learner. Therefore, a qualitative study seeking whether an adolescent could report similar findings of growth in the area of self-confidence was needed.

Service Learning. Another aspect of travel abroad experiences discussed in the literature was service learning. Service learning at each level, from elementary to secondary education, was often identified as not much more than institutionalized community service opportunities (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004). However, combining travel and service to certain target areas to serve other cultures could challenge student's ideas and ways of thinking about the world to create greater cultural competency, which was evidenced in multiple studies (Kohlbray, 2016; Le et al., 2013; Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004). However, as indicated by Tonkin and Quiroga (2004), participants have vastly different experiences based on the location, funding, and resource allocation provided during their travel experience. The participants in this study did not have access to a service-learning opportunity while *on tour*. However, service learning within the global travel experience is important to note due to the level of changes that could be found within an individual. Therefore, future studies could analyze this particular aspect among adolescent aged participants.

Global Travel Experience – Additional Potential Outcomes

While there were several identified positive outcomes of engaging in a study abroad experience already discussed, some additional outcomes were revealed. One major theme that emerged was the challenge to an individual's collective identity, therefore simultaneously challenging one's personal identity. A study done by Ostermark (2011) exposed the changes that can occur between an individual and their attitude

towards their host country and their home country. Ostermark (2011) found that regardless of the prior attitude towards a host country, the individual developed a more realistic perspective once they have immersed themselves within the new culture. Secondly, Ostermark (2011) found individuals also had a heightened sense of their home culture. The travel experience projected a negative attitude towards the structure of one's home society for one participant, while another participant viewed their home country more favorably after the travel experience. Although a concentrated study among only two participants, noting how changes occurred among participants towards the host and one's home country, whether good or bad, is important. This change can demonstrate changes within one's affective development, occurring in the organization stage, the fourth stage of the affective process. One goal of my study was to determine participant's perceived changes within their own appreciation for both their home and host cultures as they moved through affective development, therefore this literature is relevant to my study.

National Self-Image. A qualitative study done by Brown and Brown (2013) confirmed an international experience can impact an individual's national self-image. Brown and Brown (2013) took five post-graduate students, all from different origins, and interviewed them on their perceptions of their collective identity. Baumann (2000) claimed a difference exists between personal identity, giving understanding to the 'I,' and the social identity giving meaning to the 'we.' This difference is important because attacks, cultural or otherwise, on one's social identity or national identity, can invoke intense emotion within an individual. In an international experience, an individual can somewhat separate their personal identity from their national identity, but

once one's national identity is attacked, an individual's personal identity can be severely impacted by the attack (Brown & Brown, 2013). In this study, "western" countries consistently viewed participant's countries negatively through comments, suggestions, actions, and physical and verbal cue. One participant was looked so poorly on; she did not want to disclose her national origin. This challenge to national identity can be extremely impactful to one's self-esteem. Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge which countries have "superiority" views of others and make travelers aware of culture shock that may occur as a result of exploring a new realm and to also battle against natural instinct to make cultural observances that may be incorrect (Brown & Brown, 2013).

Perhaps the only way to battle this is to engage in the foreign travel experience to explore cultural truths and myths. A goal of this study was to explore how participants viewed their home country prior to engagement with travel and post engagement. Further, participants were asked to explore their emotions towards different countries and how they perceived those countries. This probe into reflection of one's emotions pre- and post-travel sought to reveal changes within an individual's feeling and attitudes towards diverse peoples and cultures.

Global Travel Experiences – Not the Study Abroad

While the majority of the research reviewed concentrated on college age students as they participated in study abroad, Alexander, Bakir, and Wickens (2010) studied 172 participants and found vacation travel had a significant impact on the participants. They found at least one of five categories (behavior, attitude, confidence, emotional change, and increase in knowledge or skills) was impacted by 53% of participants. Factors found

to influence the impact was interaction with others, destination's culture, travel partners, and length of trip (Alexander et al., 2010). Another study analyzed the international experience among five different mediums: university study abroad, study abroad with another college, informal education travel abroad, service-learning travel, or recreation travel, to see which ones held the most scholarship (Stebbleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013). Results indicated that all five travel programs increased student understanding of global issues and the student's ability to apply knowledge in global context was present in four of the five programs. Therefore, evidence from research supports that programs beyond the exclusive college study abroad can be effective in producing increases in cultural competence and self-confidence.

Byrnes (2001) suggested travel schooling as a way for American students to participate in foreign learning experiences that allows the student exposure, interactions, changes, and practice of skills. Byrnes (2001) indicated in order to produce successful travel schooling, many of the aforementioned barriers must be accounted for: time constraints, advanced preparation and planning, and an inclusive itinerary are essential. Feldberg (2016) created a survey for 2,143 teachers and students, and found teachers believe travel positively impacts students. Travel experience was believed to create social change among students, including better test scores, contribution in class, cultural awareness, and self-esteem. These are studies that support the contention that high school students can have a highly impactful global travel experience, much like that of the college study abroad. Suggestions for a positive global experience include journaling, reflections, and keeping back and forth emails to create reflective learning experiences once back in the individual's home country (Byrnes, 2001; Garbati &

Rothschild, 2016; Le et al., 2013). These experiences are important to note, as adolescent aged students do not typically qualify for a study abroad. However, adolescents could likely to engage in a limited educational travel excursion while waiting for the opportunity to study abroad. Further, these limited experiences could produce changes within an individual, as suggested by this study.

Summary

This literature review focused on several topics relevant to the study. Containing several sections, this review included information on constructivist learning theories with a focus on TLT, identified differences between adolescents and young adult/adult learners, and an understanding of skills and affective development. The review of literature also contained reported outcomes of global travel among college-age learners for reference. To explore the adolescent experience with global travel, I examined study abroad and field trip travel with a particular emphasis on affective development and cultural competency. This review of the literature highlighted a gap does exist in the study of global travel experiences on rural adolescents. Not only is the adolescent population missing from research studies, but affective development within cultural competency among adolescents is also absent. In the next chapter, a discussion of methodology, data collection, and analysis is provided for the study.

Chapter III. Methodology

To understand how a global travel experience taken during adolescence impacted cultural competency through the affective learning process, three research questions were asked: What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience? What aspects of the global travel experience contributed to shaping the rural adolescents' cultural experience? How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence? A basic interpretive research design was used with data analyzed from both participant interviews and focus group discussions. In this chapter, I describe the research design, participant selection site and procedures, descriptions of data collection and analysis procedures, and strategies used to maximize validity and trustworthiness of the research.

Research Design

In order to construct meaning from one's reflection of a global travel experience, a basic interpretive research design was adopted. A basic interpretive research design allows researchers to explore how a person interprets a given experience, constructs their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through this exploration, I was able to identify evidence of change in the affective domain within each traveler and found out what *essence* or *manifestation* emerged among the shared experience of all the travelers (Husserl, 1931).

I chose the basic interpretive qualitative design to study the structure of the experience in relation to perception, memories, imagination, emotion, and social activity—all experiences Husserl (1931) called “intentionality.” Vagle (2014) explained intentionality as interconnectedness, as *essencing*, or as reconceiving through images. I

analyzed the ability of the participant to construct meaning from their experience of travel. According to Giorgi (2009), qualitative research allows the researcher to communicate an experience from the participant through description. This description allows the researcher to communicate the invariant meanings based on the analysis conducted within the reduction process (Giorgi, 2009). I was trying to capture experiential accounts and personal stories that lent themselves to understanding what meaning, or intentionality, each participant constructed as a result of global travel. Therefore, I sought to find what made up the meaning or content of the global experience for each participant—looking *through* the participant’s individualized meanings. Furthermore, I sought to examine if their meanings included any perceived cultural competency development. This study was designed to investigate the following three research questions:

RQ1. What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience?

RQ2. What aspects of the global travel experience contributed to shaping rural adolescents’ cultural experience?

RQ3: How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence?

Based on the aforementioned reasons, the basic interpretive design was best suited to the purpose of this study and for finding the answers to the questions listed above.

Participants

To understand the meaning constructed by a rural adolescent’s experience with global travel and what they identified in their own development through extensive

reflection, purposive sampling was used to recruit participants that formerly attended two rural Title I high schools in Southwest Georgia. According to Maxwell (2013), participants deliberately chosen to provide information relevant to research questions and goals in a purposive sampling can leverage an already established trusting relationship with the researcher. All six female participants had a prior relationship with me as the researcher and these participants were accessible for the entire duration of the extensive interview process.

Two Rural Title I High Schools

Two rural Title I high schools in the southeastern United States, located in Southwest Georgia, School A and School B, were the locations participants were originally recruited from to engage in a global travel experience. Both School A and School B were locations, I as the researcher, had worked and developed a high school travel program within. Therefore, I already had a relationship with the students contacted for this study, which was an added benefit to me as the researcher (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002). School A is a diverse high school serving approximately 2,000 students grades ten through twelve. The demographic makeup of the high school is 40.3% White, 29% Hispanic, 26.7% African American, and 4% multiracial or other. Furthermore, approximately 65% of students qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch. School B is located in a district housing five schools and serving approximately 2,900 students in total. The district demographics were represented as 71.8% African American, 25.04% White, and less than 3% multiracial or other. School B's district also has a population of 66.7% receiving Free and Reduced Lunch. However, participants within this study were chosen from School B's "school-within-a-school program," therefore the demographics

specific to the participants from School B was not reflective of the district demographics as a whole.

Purposive Sampling

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to recruit participants purposively. First, the participant pool was set to those who had traveled when they were aged 15 to 18 years old to examine adolescents' cultural development due to global travel. Second, the pool was narrowed down by travelers who were at least 254 days past their first global travel experience at the time of recruitment for this study. According to Lally, Jaarsveld, Potts, & Wardle (2010), habits can take 18 to 254 days of action to become a pattern. Assuming student behavior changed as a result of the global travel experience, those who potentially sustained their habitual change for over 254 days were the primary target for recruitment. Among those students, travelers who had at least one year of an adolescent teacher/student relationship with me as their teacher prior to their global travel experience and had continued interaction post travel, received an invitation to participate in the study. Lastly, any potential participants who already had their first global travel experience prior to middle adolescence were excluded from recruitment, to retain focus on the impact of global travel on rural adolescents.

Table one illustrates how 12 adolescent travelers were identified and selected from a total of 40 students who participated in a global travel experience during the years I facilitated both School A and School B’s high school travel program.

Table 1

Population Selection Criteria and Sampling Frame

Travel Year	2014	2016	2017	2019	Total
School Location	School A	School A	School B	School B	-
Country Locations	England, France, Italy	Italy, Monaco, France, Spain	China	Italy, Greece	-
City Locations	London, Paris, Normandy, Florence, Rome	Milan, Cinque Terre, Monaco, Nice, Barcelona	Beijing, Xi’an, Shanghai	Florence, Rome, Sorrento, Patras, Delphi, Athens	-
# of travelers	7	19	8	6	40
# of travelers I had a relationship with prior to trip	5	8	5	6	24
Of the travelers I had a relationship with, # of	3	4	3	2	12

1st time international
travelers

Participant Pool Demographics

Based on the narrowed #s, gender	3 females	2 females	2 females	2 females	-
			2 females		
		2 males	1 male		-
Based on narrowed #s, race	1 - Black	1 - Black	1 - Black	2 - White	-
	2 - White	3 - White	2 - White		-

Email Recruitment

After eliminating student travelers based on the aforementioned selection criteria, interest surveys were sent to twelve of the forty former travelers (see Appendix A). The global travel experience analyzed in this study was the first global travel experience any of the participants engaged with. As a result of having traveled with me in the past, I had access to all of the former traveler’s email information. Therefore, the twelve travelers who met the selection criteria were sent an interest e-mail detailing the purpose of the study and the requirements for participation in the study.

Participants

Of the twelve students solicited to participate in the study, six participants agreed to participate. Of the six participants, four were white females and two were black females. Additionally, three of the participants grew up and attended middle school and high school in the same community their entire childhood (all attended School A), two participants attended elementary in one community but attended middle and high school in another (both participants moved from School A to School B), and one participant grew up in two different communities and attended two different schools (both public and private) within the same community. The six participants who agreed to the study came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, traveled to different locations (e.g., Europe and China), and traveled in a different time frame (e.g., 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019). Extensive reflection among the participants allowed the researcher to unveil whether the six females who came from diverse backgrounds and races could have similar affective development through the global travel experience (Creswell, 2009).

As Vagle (2014) and van Manen (2014) stated, the sample size comes from the researcher's intuition regarding how many participants need to be investigated. Despite a relatively low number of participants in this study ($N = 6$), efforts were made to ensure the collection of rich data that allowed investigation into each participant's unique experience. This rich data offered a complete picture of what they felt, how they interacted, their memories, and their emotions. Therefore, the number of participants were intentionally kept low.

Data Collection

Approval to conduct this study and methods used to gather consent from participants is discussed below. Information regarding the interview process and the closed online Facebook discussion group is also detailed below. There were two phases to this study in sequential order: semi-structured interviews with the individual participants and a series of five online Facebook discussion forums. I believed having two different variants of data collection could potentially have added to the depth of data, richness of data, and to the validity of finding the essence of travel among each participant. Maxwell (2013) discussed using different methods as a check on each other. Each collection method has its own strengths and limitations, therefore, a study where multiple methods supported the same conclusion reduced the risk of method bias and enhanced the understanding of the issues I was investigating (Maxwell, 2013).

The semi-structured interviews took place in a location preferred by the participant, usually a local coffee shop. In addition to interviews, participants were invited to participate in a closed, private social media platform where a series of five online discussions were held (Zwaanswijk & van Dulmen, 2014). The online platform included the participants and a new discussion was posted each week for a period of five consecutive weeks. Each discussion opened on a Sunday evening at five o'clock and remained open for the entirety of the five-week period. Further, each online discussion prompt revolved around focal points from the interviews done prior to the five-week period of the online sessions. Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity with the interview transcription and data analysis.

Prior to any phase of this research being initiated, I gained full Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix B) and dissertation committee approval. This study adhered to the guidelines involving human subjects and was in compliance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR 46.102(2009). The six participants did so voluntarily and were provided an Informed Consent (Appendix C) prior to each interview.

Consent to Participate in Study

Prior to beginning of each interview, I recited the participant consent script (see Appendix C) to each individual and asked if they were willing to participate in the interview. I asked participants to confirm their age by acknowledging they were currently 18 or older. Additionally, the consent script was provided as a post to the participants in the closed Facebook discussion group. To ensure the post could be seen each time a participant logged into the Facebook group, the post was locked at the top of the news feed. This notification served as a reminder each time a participant logged into the group they could actively choose to participate or decline participation at any point.

Phase I: Interview Process

Recorded, semi-structured interviews were the primary source of information for this study. Therefore, as the researcher responding to the participant, using skill and tact was of utmost importance (Seidman, 2013). Skill and tact evolves from practice and development of credibility comes through training, experience, and status (Patton, 2002). Vagle (2014) recommended to speak cautiously, providing the participant freedom to extend their commentary. During each interview I took field notes and after each

interview I recorded both written and verbal memos to document my own emotions, reactions, and thoughts from the interviews (Maxwell, 2013).

In order to collect data from the selected participants I employed the three 90 minutes interview process with each participant (Seidman, 2013). The three interviews employed focused first on life history, secondly on the details of the experience (i.e., the first global travel experience), and lastly reflected on the meaning of the experience (Giorgi, 2009). Each of the participant's shared background information during the first interview which offered insight into commonalities despite varied childhood experiences. Further, the information provided highlighted identified barriers to the development of cultural competency prior to global travel. In the second interview, participants were able to relive their experience and provide details about how they felt, and what stood out to them, from their exposure to a new geographical location. The third interview was designed for participants to reveal what travel meant to them in their current lives and identify any perceived increase in cultural competency as a result of their reflection on the experience.

According to Seidman (2013), interviews need to be conducted by someone skilled in the process of gathering rich data. Seidman's (2013) suggestions included understanding a participant may tend to move into information reserved for interview two during interview one, therefore it may be necessary for the researcher to direct the participant back to the focus of interview one. This redirection respects the method of interviews and the process by which meaning is truly developed among each participant. To ensure the questions developed for this study were going to yield answers

to the research questions—and to meet the root purpose of each interview—a pilot interview was done using questions provided in Appendix E.

As a result of the pilot interview, I was able to increase my questions from the original ten to include several sub-questions (e.g., In terms of interactions, can you give specific examples in your childhood where you engaged, at a friend level, with those of a different ethnicity? (birthday parties, spend the night party). Additionally, I was able to develop different lines of questioning based on potential variant responses from participants which helped evaluate whether my questions would answer the research questions and yield rich data (Seidman, 2013). The additional sub-questions were prepared to help investigate the depth of the participant's experiences (e.g., If interaction and friendships were limited, was there ever any explanation for those limitations?) Each interview targeted a different goal so providing openness for the interviewee and focus for the structure to work was imperative (Seidman, 2013). Additional benefits of the pilot interviews included both employing memoing and practicing the skill and tact needed to yield rich data (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013; Vagle, 2014). The final version of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix E.

The interviews used in this study lasted from 57 minutes to 2 hours and 9 minutes. The verbal consent script was read at the beginning of each interview and participation in the interviews served as consent to participate. These interviews took place where the participant felt most comfortable, usually a local coffee shop. Each of the interviews was audiotaped during the process using two different methods (Vagle, 2014). Each participant was considered an expert in their experience and the intent of the interview process was to find descriptions of their experience within the context of the framework

established (Giorgi, 2009). When interviewing the participants, I was less interested in the factual accuracy of the experience and more interested in the plausibility of an account—whether one believed their account to be truth (Giorgi, 2009). Both van Manen (2014) and Vagle (2014) believed what was most important to reveal through the interview was how each participant experienced the phenomenon. From these honest reflections, an analysis could be done to evaluate potential changes with the participants.

Phase II: Facebook Forum

The second phase of data collection consisted of an online discussion board conducted within a closed, private Facebook social media platform over a span of five consecutive weeks. The only people who had access to the content within the Facebook group was me as the researcher and the participants who engaged with the study. After data was collected from the individual interviews, the online discussion forum gave participants the ability to further explore the meaning of travel in their lives.

The purpose of the online discussion group was to generate more spontaneous responses, to create a sense of cohesiveness among participants, and to provide an environment to discuss topics not necessarily explored through interviews (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). Participants were asked to respond to a prompt each week and, if desired, they could respond to others through the Facebook page. Each new discussion prompt posted on Sunday evening at five o'clock pm, and reminders and notifications were sent to encourage participation. I engaged as the moderator of the group, giving as little direction as possible, while encouraging engagement and openness among the participants (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Due to my already established

relationship with the participants, there was an ease in the flow of conversation and participation in each discussion (Maxwell, 2013).

The purpose of the online setting was to yield robust data by allowing participants to engage with the discussions as their individual schedule permitted, without the pressure of time constraints, and the ability to participate from a location the participant was comfortable with (Zwaanswijk & van Dulmen, 2014). Additionally, the online environment allowed each participant to review comments and continually engage in discussion as new comments were interjected. Further, the online setting allowed each participant to participate without the interruption that could occur in a traditional face to face discussion group. This environment gave the participant time to process the discussion and fully share their own perspective and the meaning they derived from their experience (Zwaanswijk & van Dulmen, 2014). The discussions served the purpose of assisting with internal consistency, specificity, trustworthiness, and finding big ideas within the data (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

The first discussion began with a reminder the participants of voluntary participation and the ability to opt out of participating at any time. The group was locked and content was not shared outside of the page. Participants were also reminded of the confidentiality of the discussion group and given assurances none of their information nor content was shared with anyone by the researcher. Participants were also reminded due to the nature of the group being online, there could be no guarantee of confidentiality as each participant had access to each other's comments.

Each of the discussion topics were chosen based on review of literature, my personal experience traveling with adolescents, and focal points derived from preliminary

analysis of interview data (see Appendix E for Facebook Discussion Topics). The online discussion topics served to validate emergent themes from the interviews while additionally generating new themes as participants compared experiences. At the end of the fifth week, there were a lack of responses by participants. Although the method was justified through the aforementioned reasons, the online discussions did not yield the robust data hoped for by the design.

Participant Privacy and Confidentiality of Information

The participants were given pseudonyms in this study for protection of their privacy. In terms of the individual interviews and the online discussions, there was no risk for civil or criminal liability for involvement with this study and no financial or reputational damage was done by participating. Both the interviews and the online focus forum carried no inherent risk beyond normal daily activity. The interviews and online discussions were transcribed, and I protected anonymity within my participants by using pseudonyms. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and a voice recorder app on an Apple iPhone. I used both machines in the event one malfunctioned during the interviews. The software on the iPhone was password protected and secure, so there was no chance of accidental sharing for public consumption. Due to the discussions being online, there was more opportunity for participants to share information revealed within the page with members of the public. Therefore, a recurring post regarding this information was on constant display to encourage participants to keep information shared confidential. Although the discussions were posted in a private group, there still was a risk associated with written words in an online setting being shared by participants outside the group setting. Immediately following the interviews and online discussions, I

hired a professional transcriptionist to transcribe all of the audio-recordings and secured the audio files to a locked and password protected hard drive. Privacy was secured during the transcription process ensuring no real names were used during the interviews and recordings were transferred with headings using pseudonyms. A duplicate of all files were copied to a password-protected computer for backup purposes. After three years, the data will permanently be deleted from any stored locations.

Data Analysis

In total, interviews ranging from 57 minutes to two hours and nine minutes each, a total of 20 hours and 24 minutes of interview data and 2,765 words from a five week-long online discussion data with the six participants were analyzed in this study. In both interview and online discussion data, common themes and trends were identified, color coded, and labeled to ensure easy identification (Creswell, 2009). Details of the analysis process are described below.

Analysis of Interviews

The process of analyzing the interviews moved through a systematic process: whole-parts-whole, focused on intentionality and not subjective experience, maintained a balance among verbatim excerpts, and worked in the realm of understanding the creation of a text rather than simplifying the data to coding (Vagle, 2014). Since each interview was recorded, transcripts were made for each interview.

Upon completion of the interviews, I uploaded the audio recordings to a professional transcriptionist. I verified the accuracy of the audio recordings by listening and confirming transcripts. Each participant received a copy of their transcripts for verification of their statements and opinions throughout the interviews. Listening to the

audio of the transcripts and then reading them, I became familiar with each participant's voice and the text. Through completing this process step one of Vagle's (2014) analysis process was completed, the holistic reading of the text. After the initial reading of each transcript, I read through each transcript a second time. This second reading became my first line-by-line reading, a process that included taking notes and bracketing the information (Seidman, 2013; Vagle, 2014). After this step, I used both the transcripts and memos taken during and after each interview to chunk the data by coding information I initially found relevant to answering the research questions. This first line-by-line reading helped me explore what major themes were emerging from the data. The next step was to read each participant's transcript for a second line-by-line reading, where I sought to find meaning based on notes, markings, underlined information, and highlighted text I thought was pertinent to understanding a participant's experience. This second line-by-line reading also consisted of finding similarities and differences among the data and categorizing that data (Vagle, 2014). This step further helped narrow the emergent themes into the overarching categories that ultimately helped answer the research questions. A third line-by-line reading was done to begin the analytic decision-making for each participant and then I looked for themes across all participants (Vagle, 2014). This last step is when the emergent themes became clearly identified and organized into categories that are later addressed in Chapter Four.

Analysis of Facebook Discussion Data

The data accumulated through the Facebook discussion group remained on the page until the study was completed. Due to the nature of a written online discussion group, the information given was organically transcribed already. Therefore, I used a

similar analysis strategy as the previously mentioned interview analysis to code data from the online group upon completion of the last discussion. I used the complete copy of the discussion text from the online group to code data, analyze keywords-in-context, and check for conformity of opinion. To ensure I accurately understood and comprehended the information shared by each participant, I used participant verification process. The participant verification process of member checking was natural as participants could look back at their own words and make any additions or corrections (Creswell, 2009).

At the end of each week-long forum, I looked for commonalities and trends among participant responses to help guide the questions for later weeks. Similar to how I analyzed the interview data, after the five weeks were over, I coded discussion data, analyzed keywords-in-context, and checked for conformity of opinion within the online transcript. Additionally, I compared the online data to the interview data to analyze for any variations or discrepancies among comments.

Analysis of Memos

Memos were an extremely important part of the entire data collection and analysis process. I took memos throughout the entire process including during interviews, after interviews, and during each reading. Analysis of the memos were used to help facilitate my thinking and assisted with finding relationships within the data (Maxwell, 2013). Ultimately, I engaged with the data to find meaning among the participants in order to understand the impact of the global travel experience on each person.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Two specific validity threats Maxwell (2013) warned against are addressed in this section: subjectivity and researcher bias. Maxwell (2013), Seidman (2013), and Creswell

(2009) all advocated for the use of validity tests in the research process. For this study, I used rich data, respondent validation, triangulation, and peer debriefing to ensure validity within my study. The aforementioned methods are discussed in detail below to ensure the management of validity and trustworthiness of the study.

Memos

One tool I employed to address validity in my research, I engaged in memo writing throughout the entire data collection and analysis process (Maxwell, 2013). These memos consisted of my own thoughts, questions, concerns, and reflections throughout the data collection and analysis process. Throughout the data collection process I used memo writing to ensure I remembered important insights, things I may not have remembered without memos, but were no less important to encapsulating the entire research process (Maxwell, 2013). Throughout the data analysis process, I used memos to help capture my own thoughts and help organize my thinking about the data in a more contextualized way (Maxwell, 2013). Memos were used as a tool to compare and contrast the data, analyze cause and consequence, and helped to create clusters of concepts based on groupings (Maxwell, 2013). Those clusters were eventually used in assisting in the development of categories to help answer the research questions. The importance of memos to this study must not go unnoted, as it allowed reflection on any given moment of the research journey (Maxwell, 2013). The ability to reflect back on my memos throughout the research and writing process was vital to my continued focus on this project.

Rich Data

Due to the nature of qualitative research and the role of the researcher and participants as co-researchers, the factor needing to be most accommodated for was the instrument—the human interviewer (Seidman, 2013). Further, questions can arise about whether the research was valid due to the participant-interviewer relationship. How does one know if the participant was truthful, how do we know they would not have responded differently to another person? These questions were tackled by the 90-minute three-interview process, as it enhanced validity among the information released from each participant (Seidman, 2013). According to Seidman (2013), material consistent from the first interview to the third interview supported checks on internal consistency.

Additionally, Maxwell (2013) said rich data should be descriptive enough to create a clear picture of what was going on. The three-interview process was a rigorous method for fieldwork, yielding high quality data (Patton, 2002). Interviewing multiple people allowed me to connect experiences and compare them against each other, which further increased validity within my study (Seidman, 2013). My skills of interviewing also added confidence in authenticity of the interviews. These skills included keeping quiet, not interrupting thoughts, not redirecting while participant was thinking (Seidman, 2013). As previously mentioned, I practiced my interviewing technique through a pilot study, which served to enhance my ability to not only employ a successful series of interviews, yielding rich data. Validity in this study was further assured through the channeling of meaning to both the participant and the researcher through the interviewing process (Seidman, 2013).

Respondent Validation (Member Checking)

To rule out the potential of misinterpreting the meaning derived from each participant and also possibly identify some of my own researcher bias, Maxwell (2013) and Creswell (2009) both suggested using member checking. I used member checking for both the interviews and the Facebook online discussions to ensure my interpretations matched the beliefs of the participants. For each data source, I sent the results of my analysis to each participant for review to ensure accuracy of their responses.

Triangulation

Creswell (2009) said themes established through convergent data could lead to increased validity. To increase validity, I searched for consistency of emergent themes using my use of the intensive three interview process, the online discussion group, and my own extensive personal memos gathered during data collection. Therefore, in this study, triangulation was used through gathering these multiple sources of data from various participants.

Researcher-Interviewer

Acknowledging the makeup of who I was and my deeper connection to experiential learning through global travel was an important piece of this process. My educational, personal, and professional experiences through time have molded and shaped my views regarding this proposed dissertation topic. As an educator, I have adamantly and consistently fought for nontraditional methods for learning and for extensive exposure for all students. As a traveler, I have gained a deeper understanding of the value in finding ways to engage in nontraditional learning in locations both near and far.

As a child, my mother valued experiential education, although at the time, I did not understand nor value this construct. My parents took me all over the country, exploring various national landmarks, state parks, and local history. I learned about the history of America through exploring the East Coast, stopping at every historical location my parents could find. Although my family would have been classified as low-income at that time, they never shied away from finding ways for my brother and I to experience learning through hands-on, investigative approaches. During my senior year of college an opportunity to travel abroad presented itself. To say the experience of global travel transformed my life would be an understatement. As a result of that one experience, I deepened my belief in experiential learning as I began to actively seek ways to explore more cultures, traditions, places, and people.

Early in my professional career, I sought out ways to give students opportunities to explore different places. I was trusted enough by my administration to create a travel program designed to give students access to different locations around the globe. I am a believer in experiences shaping who we are, what we believe, and ultimately who we become. I believe students should have access to exposure to learning beyond the walls of the traditional classroom environment. I also believe that exposure to different ideas, places, peoples, and phenomena can cause one to pause and evaluate how new information can assimilate into current constructs.

As a traveler, both professionally and personally, I have had countless challenges to my own pre-existing constructs simply based on exposure. Each time I navigate a new location, or add additional time to an already explored location, I find myself deconstructing and reconstructing my own value sets and my own perspective.

Knowing how impactful travel has been on my own personal life and my beliefs about the benefits of travel, it was important I carefully engaged with the data collection and analysis stages of this study. All of the strategies mentioned earlier were designed to assist in eliminating any biases I held as a result of my own experiences of global travel and with the participants of the study.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research design of my study, methods of data collection and analysis, and strategies to validate trustworthiness of the study. Data was collected using Seidman's (2013) intensive three, 90-minute interviews for each participant and responses from an online discussion group lasting five weeks. Data was analyzed using Vagle's (2014) systematic whole parts whole coding techniques. I ensured maximum integrity of this study by using rich data, respondent validation, and triangulation as modes for validity tests. In Chapter Four, I discuss the results of the study.

Chapter IV. Results

The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of young people who engaged with global travel as an adolescent and whether one's cultural competency changed as a result of affective learning through their global travel experience. Seidman's 90-minute three interview series and the online discussion data from six rural adolescents with diverse backgrounds were thematically analyzed using Vagle's (2014) whole parts whole systematic process. Interview questions and discussion prompts were designed with the intent to investigate participants' cultural competency prior to travel, how participants engaged with the global experience, and whether cultural competency was perceived to increase through demonstration of movement through affective development. Table 2 includes a breakdown of how the questions and prompts were designed to answer the three research questions.

Table 2*Questions and Prompts Designed to Answer the Research Questions*

Research Questions	Interview 1 Questions	Interview 2 Questions	Interview 3 Questions	Discussion Prompts
RQ1: Perceived Cultural Competency Prior to Global Travel	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12	1, 2, 11	1, 2	
RQ2: Factors Impacting Cultural Development		2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	2	Week One Week Three
RQ3: Behavioral & Attitudinal Changes Demonstrative of Perceived Increased Cultural Competency		10, 11	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Week Two Week Four Week Five

*Questions and Prompts can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F, respectively

RQ1: Cultural Perceptions Prior to Global Travel

I developed narratives to describe the six participants based on the initial interview I conducted upon their consent to participate in the study. Participant profiles were created to help assist with answering *RQ1: What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience?* Table 3 summarizes who the participants are using pseudonyms, their experiences and conceptions of diversity prior to their first global travel, followed by the detailed narratives that illustrate individual profiles

Table 3*Participant Profiles Prior to and After the Initial Global Travel Experience*

	Sojourner	Joan	Amelia	Elizabeth	Florence	Marie
Ethnicity	Black	White	White	Black	White	White
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Travel Location	Italy Monaco Spain	England	Italy	England France Italy	China	China
	France	France Italy	Greece			
Travel Year	2016	2014	2019	2014	2017	2017
Upbringing	Single mother, rural, limited diversity	Divorced home, lived mainly with mother since very little, rural, isolated	Father and mother married, rural, limited diversity	Father and mother married, rural, limited diversity	Divorced home, lived with mother and stepfather since very little, rural, limited diversity	Parents divorced senior year of high school, rural, isolated
Personal Traits	Outgoing Boisterous Curious	Quiet Shy Curious	Studious Caring Explorer Reserved	Strong-willed Curious Deep Thinker	Outgoing Inquisitive	Social Extroverted Fun Lover

Learning interest (major)	International Affairs	Hospitality	Political Science	Police Officer	Nursing	Nursing
Current Occupation	Tech Sales	Immigration Law	College Student	Police Officer	Nurse	Nurse
Cultural Perceptions & Exposure to Cultural Diversity	Limited “it was like an identity crisis I guess sometimes because with my black friends... they would call me white and then when I was with my white friends, they wouldn’t necessarily acknowledge my	None “I was always told if people don’t look like us to be a little bit on the more cautious side, be a little bit fearful”	Limited “it felt like there was some weird boundary all the time (when discussing racial differences)” “I remember going over to a group of Black girls and...they were just like why are you over here”	Limited “sometimes you can be the same race and still be different” “we are not really a place people come to migrate... this is not an ideal place for most people who are not...born and raised here...to come”	Limited “I just always found it interesting... we speak the same language, so like, why do we look so different?”	None “I don’t think I would necessarily go out of my way to hang out with friends that were different than me”

race, but like I knew I
was different”

Cultural Informant	Mother (+)	Father (-)	Black caregiver (+)	Brother’s girlfriend (+)	Mom’s Puerto Rican best friend (+)	None
Prior to Global Travel	Spanish teacher (+)	Spanish teacher (+)	Guatemalan housekeeper (+)	brother		
*Positive (+)			Indian lady at church (+)	(-)	Black worker at parent’s restaurant (+)	
*Negative (-)			Swedish friends of grandparent (+)	father (-)		
Researcher-Perceived Degree of Cultural Change	5	5	5	4	4	5

Sojourner

Sojourner is a black female raised by a single mother in a rural town in the South.

Sojourner has never met a stranger and is very outgoing and boisterous. She is loved by many and naturally curious. She attended the same public school system from K-12 and then attended college and majored in International Affairs. Sojourner described travel in her childhood as limited, with most of the travel through school field trips or as a tag-a-long on her brother's Boy Scout adventures. As one of the only Black members of her competition cheerleading squad and a tag-a-long with her brother's all White Boy Scout's group, Sojourner learned how to navigate what she described as "White spaces."

Additionally, she was labeled a gifted student in elementary school and was placed in classes with large White populations. Sojourner described walking into class each year and only having one or two other Black students in her classes. These classroom circumstances led her to finding which other Black students "were like her" in class and then exploring whether their personalities would mingle well together. Sojourner described this as understanding that "all skin folk ain't kinfolk." This comment was Sojourner stating that just because people may share the same skin color, it doesn't mean they think or behave in the same manner. Sojourner described this as, "just because you're the same race or the same culture of someone else doesn't mean you're going to have the same personality."

Sojourner's mother grew up in the Hill District of Pittsburg as an adopted child to a Black family. Sojourner recounted her grandfather's childhood as what she described as being raised in "slave like conditions," and was very involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Her mother had neighborhood experiences with police brutality, which

shaped her mother's perspective of White people, but Sojourner described her mother as "being guarded but not putting them (whites) all into generic stereotypes." Despite some negative experiences herself, Sojourner's mother pushed Sojourner to engage with different groups outside of the Black community and challenge the status quo. One example of this was allowing Sojourner and her brother to camp in tents with the Boy Scouts in Blairsville, GA, an area her mother knew to have an active Ku Klux Klan presence. Another was allowing Sojourner to spend the night with peers of a different race. Regardless, Sojourner grew up in a community she felt allowed a limited amount of exposure to diverse people groups with only three major demographic groups represented: Blacks, Latinx, and Whites.

Sojourner only had a few people in her life she considered to be cultural informants. One of those people was a Spanish teacher in school. Learning about Spanish culture from her Spanish teacher was the closest she came to any type of new cultural diversification in her life. Sojourner's first memory of an international event was the impact of 9/11 on the world and she remembered from a young age not understanding why things could not have been handled diplomatically. Mixed messages through school and media left Sojourner not being able to pinpoint her emotions towards the war, but knew she held sympathy for both the American troops overseas and the Middle Eastern people who were being stereotyped in America.

Sojourner was prompted to take the global travel opportunity because it was the first time an opportunity was offered to travel internationally and she just really wanted to go. Since her initial travel experience to Italy, France, Monaco, and Spain, she has traveled internationally to South Africa for a college study abroad and various locations

within the USA. Sojourner said she was completely transformed by her global travel experience and feels like travel has completely changed her and her life. She self-described as travel being part of her identity now and will sacrifice material things in order to travel.

Joan

Joan is a white female whose parents divorced when she was two and she lived between both parents, but mainly with her mother. She grew up in a rural Southern town and attended the same public school system from K-12 and then attended college and majored in hospitality. Throughout Joan's life, she has been the quiet and shy one. The only travel Joan engaged with prior to her first international trip was to Washington, D.C., Hawaii, and a couple days at the beach in the summer. Joan described her family as "very much homebodies" and just not having a desire to travel, but also acknowledged her recognition at a young age that other families did travel. Joan described her exposure to cultural diversity as "100% lacking" and stated, "if we were going to be somewhere where other types of people might be, we were always kind of like...these people look different, so they are going to act different than me." Growing up Joan felt very isolated and knew it would not be allowed to invite peers of other races to spend the night or hang out after school together. There was no one in Joan's life that was from another country. The first person Joan noticed was accepting of cultural diversity was her Spanish teacher, who was White. She found comfort in thinking she could be White and really have a deep appreciation for another culture and people group. In contrast to this was her own father, a military member, who fought radical Muslim extremists in the Middle East and

as a result, came home with extremely negative stories of this part of the world. These stories would shape the way Joan perceived Middle Eastern people groups.

Her earliest memories of international events were both 9/11 and the Royal Wedding of William and Kate. Despite not having any real exposure to diverse people groups or positive interactions with newsworthy international events, Joan read a lot of books and watched a lot of movies which prompted her to want to explore Europe. She said watching the Royal Wedding, reading about Cinderella type stories in books and watching movies made her want to go to these locations. She also took an Advanced Placement European History class where she learned a lot about the places she was going to explore. Joan was prompted to take the global travel opportunity because it was the first time an opportunity was offered, she really wanted to go, and she wanted to compare the experience to what she read about and watched on TV and in the movies. Since her initial travel experience to England, France, and Italy, she has traveled internationally to South Africa on a service-learning mission and various locations within the USA. The international trip Joan took as an adolescent was the catalyst for her future travels. Not only did Joan declare her confidence increased because of her first global travel experience, but also in how she responds and perceives humans around the globe.

Florence

Florence is a white female whose parents divorced when she was very young and was raised by her mother and her stepfather. She grew up in between two rural Southern towns and attended both private and public systems throughout her K-12 education. She attended a private institution until middle school and then transferred to a public institution. She is now working towards her nursing degree at university. Florence

believed travel was a priority within her family growing up and has a naturally inquisitive nature about her.

Florence was a big lover of all things American and believed everyone wanted to come to America and America was the best. She also believes she grew up curious about other people and differences that exist between people groups. Florence's biggest cultural informant throughout childhood was her mother's best friend, a Puerto Rican living in Florida, who visited once a year every year. Florence felt very close to this woman and her family and learned a lot about Puerto Rican cultural differences as a result. Although Florence believed she grew up without a lot of cultural diversity, Florence believes she was able to interact with different cultural groups when the opportunity presented. Her elementary years were filled with very limited exposure to diversity, as she attended an almost all White private school. Although Florence did not receive exposure through school, her parents owned a restaurant downtown and had a predominately Black wait staff. This was where she received information on Black culture and started wondering about differences in "normal" things like hair texture that were actually very different between races. When Florence moved from private school to public school, the public school she attended did not have a lot of diversity either, which put her close to the same position she had already existed in—with a lack of opportunity for diverse friendships.

In terms of international identity, Florence's first international memory was the Olympics. Her memories revolved around all the flags for the different countries. At the time, she remembered being curious about all of the different flags for Asian countries in

particular, but acknowledged she thought all Asians “were Chinese” and stigmatized them.

Florence’s first travel international experience was to China and since has traveled internationally to Italy and Greece, has a trip to France planned, and gone various locations around the USA. Prior to Florence’s global travel, she had very limited real exposure to international cultural diversity and grouped people into stereotypes. As a result of her first global experience, which she continually described as a major culture shock for her, Florence said she feels like a completely different person, humanizes people more, and has a strong sense of cultural appreciation.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a black female who was raised in a two-parent household in the rural South. She attended the same educational institution for K-12 and then attended college in which she proceeded to enter into the police force upon graduation. She has been working as a police officer for several years now within her home community. Elizabeth has not received support for her career choice among her family members and can feel sometimes feel isolated from her racial community and family due to her professional choice. Elizabeth is strong-willed and makes decisions based on what she wants, not based on expectations of others. Elizabeth is also curious and tends to think deeply. Elizabeth grew up as the daughter to two Free Masons and described travel as frequent throughout her childhood.

Elizabeth navigated easily through both White, Black, and Hispanic spaces, had friends in each group, but does not feel as though she grew up with cultural diversity in her community or school. In terms of understanding the cultures she was exposed to

growing up, Elizabeth was allowed to spend the night in different racial environments, particularly with her White friends. However, Elizabeth felt Hispanics and Whites were “superior” because that was the message she felt she was getting from her Black community. Elizabeth grew up with the mentality that Whites could get what they wanted. She struggled with being hostile to White women in particular, wondering what White women did to be more desirable to men and how and why Black women would modify their own selves to be more “White.”

Throughout childhood, a major cultural informant for her was the girlfriend of her brother, who was a young woman from Africa. Through exposure to her brother’s girlfriend, she was able to learn about some differences within American Black people and Africans in regard to family structure, food, and basic cultural ideals. Elizabeth changed her perspective on Africa based on this exposure. Her mentality prior had been based off of TV commercials stereotyping all Africans as poor and pot-bellied. Her brother’s girlfriend was an African with multiple degrees, spoke several languages, and came from a wealthy family. Outside of this one person, Elizabeth does not have any other cultural informants beyond the three demographics represented in her school community.

In terms of international diversity, Elizabeth remembers the war in Afghanistan and being terrified of anyone who looked like they were from the Middle East. Shaping her perspective was her military brother, and because of his profession, she housed a lot of fear about what would happen to him. Elizabeth actually wanted to leave America for a while because she was so fearful of being bombed due to TV and media reports. Her pride in America spiked during this time, as she felt the troops were going to protect her.

Since her initial travel experience to England, France, and Italy, she has been unable to travel internationally. However, Elizabeth described herself as changed because of her global experience. Prior to this experience, Elizabeth had one other opportunity to travel outside of the USA, one in which she ultimately did not attend. Elizabeth saw people from different parts of the world lumped together and generalized them as the same. After her experience, Elizabeth said she has been much more open to understanding people as individuals instead of grouping everyone together.

Amelia

Amelia is a white female raised in a two-parent household in the rural South. She grew up and attended school in her home community until middle school, in which she moved schools to attend school in a community adjacent to her for educational opportunities not provided in her current school. Amelia is always up for an adventure and is outgoing. Amelia is studious, cares deeply, and thinks before she responds, making her the most reserved of my participants. Amelia traveled with her family growing up, but it was limited to places within America her extended family lived. Amelia did not feel exposed to a lot of cultural diversity growing up, outside of the three main groups of Black, Hispanic, and White. In regard to these three groups, Amelia felt there was always some weird boundary up between the groups. Amelia felt like groups just stayed together and it really limited interactions. To Amelia, the boundary was not established by parents or school, but by the kids themselves.

Amelia did notice diversity within religious groups growing up and first noticed differences among her friends when her Jehovah Witness classmates were unable to participate in some of the classroom fun. Cultural informants for Amelia included a

Black babysitter from infancy until middle school. Amelia described this woman to be like a grandmother and she loved her very much. Amelia's mom had to drive "Ms. June" home each night and this is when Amelia noticed the area of town June lived in was not nice and was actually a bad area of town. From this experience, Amelia began looking at her Black friends in school and wondering what part of town they lived in. Further, Amelia also had a Guatemalan lady who cleaned her house throughout her entire childhood. Unfortunately, the lady's son stole from the family so she was fired. Amelia remembers being mad at her father for firing the mother for her son's transgression, but she did not speak up then. Also, an Indian lady who attended church with Amelia was another cultural informant for her. Amelia would go to her home and noticed small differences, like a wall of unique spices, within the home. Amelia's grandparent's Swedish best friends lived in both the USA and Sweden were also cultural informants, although they didn't look different, just older with an accent. Despite having some exposure to different cultural groups, Amelia did not feel deeply connected to any of these informants.

Amelia had always wanted to get out of her hometown, never felt overly attached to being an American, and jumped at the opportunity to travel abroad. In terms of comprehending international events, Amelia remembered the killing of Osama Bin Laden as a major event but did not understand why it was so important. However, she said she did have the events in the Middle East framed to her negatively by the teachers and the media in her life, shaping her perspective towards the Middle Eastern people.

Amelia is currently attending university and has since traveled internationally to France. Her initial international travel experience was to Italy and Greece. Amelia said

the experience was during a coming of age and transitional time in her life, which served to enhance her experience. Amelia feels like she was transformed by her experience and does not look at life, or people, through the same lens as she did prior to the trip.

Marie

Marie is a white female raised in a two-parent household in the rural South most of her life, until her parent's divorced while in high school. She grew up and attended school in her home community until middle school, in which she transferred to another school district for educational opportunities not available at her previous school. Marie was very social, an extrovert, and focused on more of the fun things in life. She grew up an equestrian, heavily focused on horses and competing in horse competitions. During childhood, Marie traveled with her family, but did not feel like travel was a focus for her family. Although she visited places like Colorado, Central Florida, Texas, Disney World, and the beach, she does not believe travel was a priority in her home. Growing up, Marie was a big believer in being proud to be an American and believed America was the best. Marie perceived people from different geographical regions in a judgmental way based on what she had been taught through TV and the media's portrayal of those places. The stereotypical models of Middle Eastern fear, Asians all looking Chinese, and China being scary because of communism were some of the perceptions Marie had about the world.

Marie's childhood did not have a lot of diversity. There was not one person from another country or any teacher from a different country or cultural group. There were no opportunities in her childhood or adolescence for international travel prior to this experience and no interest in travel or culture based on what Marie learned in school. Despite not having a lot of diversity in her childhood, Marie does not feel her parents put

limits on her and believes if the opportunity would have been present, she would have been allowed to engage with diverse groups in a more interactive way. Upon high school graduation, she attended nursing school, has graduated and is now a nurse and married. Since her initial trip to China, she has not traveled internationally yet, but has two international trips planned for the upcoming year. Marie described herself as completely changed by her global travel experience. Marie said she uses a lot of her experience in China as a way to empathize with her nursing patients and finds herself in an entirely new reality of what it means to be an American. Marie claimed she completely shifted the way she sees herself in the realm of the world.

Cultural Perceptions Prior To Global Travel

In order to understand how each participant perceived cultural competency growth as a result of their global travel experience, an understanding of a participant's personal history and what pre-existing cultural competency, if any, was evident prior to the global travel experience was necessary. The personal histories of each participant looked at levels of exposure to diversity, childhood cultural informants for each participant, and how participants described feeling towards other cultures and other people groups prior to their trip. To explore how each participant perceived different cultural groups, a series of questions were asked investigating how participants perceived different groups when they were young.

Overall, responses indicated lack of cultural competency. One purpose of this study was to explore affective changes toward different cultures. Therefore, understanding how participants felt about different people groups prior to international travel was pertinent to understand how much perceived development happened within the

affective domain towards diverse peoples. Cultural competency focuses on more than knowledge of other cultures, but rather involving one's skills and attitudes to interact successfully with people from diverse backgrounds (Deardorff, 2004). Therefore, exploring the attitudes individuals housed prior to the experience and comparing them to attitudes post experience became pertinent to answering the research question.

In the first interview, an investigation into each participant's background was conducted. The data from this investigation revealed information regarding how each participant viewed diverse cultures prior to their travel experience. To understand each participants' cultural competency prior to their trip, an analysis of how participants viewed different regions of the world, including their destined travel location prior to travel, and how they felt about types of diversity they were exposed to throughout childhood was conducted. In short, an analysis on what emotions participants had to both direct and indirect diversity was conducted. For this analysis, direct diversity was diversity the participant actually had exposure to in their own lives and could develop an opinion about based on their own personal experiences. Indirect diversity was diversity the participant was exposed to through a secondary medium, namely media or education, which did not allow just personal experiences to shape the participant's perspective.

Each of the travelers were asked if they had pre-existing views of the locations they were traveling before they arrived. All six participants affirmed they already held established ideas of what the area was going to be like. When discussing pre-existing views of Europeans, for instance, Joan stated, "I didn't think of them as separate countries and it was just...Europe...everybody was gonna look, talk, and act the same." Sojourner also expressed a similar sentiment as Joan saying, "I remember in school...we

learned about different cultures, but like when we learned about it, it was mostly nationalities rather than ethnicities...and so, I guess I just generalized everyone as a race and so like, I guess the race of most Europeans is white so...I didn't realize just how different they are because the European white people are not the same as like American white people, so yeah that didn't click in my head [before]." When asked what she thought about the places prior to travel she said, "the corny stereotypes of every country...bull fighting...spaghetti." This mindset of participants is indicative of a lack of cultural competency.

Elizabeth, another traveler to Europe, shared the views of both Joan and Sojourner, stating, "I thought it was a white location...I definitely didn't think I would see Africans at all." Elizabeth continued with her understanding of Europeans prior to travel stating, "I knew the French were probably gonna be different from the Italians cause when I think of Italians I always think of them making pizza and stuff like that and spaghetti and all that kind of stuff." Amelia also traveled to Europe and shared a similar view pre-trip. She said she thought about "Joey from Friends and Danny DeVito and like Italian food" when asked about Italy. Amelia thought Greece would be like "the blue waters of Mamma Mia" and Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. Further, Amelia thought everything would be classical architecture and everyone would believe in Greek Mythology. When asked if anything challenged her pre-existing beliefs, she said "definitely appearances...not everyone is super dark, super tan, dark hair, dark eyes...also in system beliefs." The four travelers who went to Europe all had a very limited view of Europe prior to travel and each of them affirmed they held stereotypical views of the locations they traveled to.

Florence, a traveler to China, was asked about pre-existing views of Chinese people prior to the trip and she responded, “rude.” When asked to elaborate, she said, “I don’t know, just picking up on just kind of like...when they talked about me in the nail salon.” Florence admitted, “I’d never had any exposure to a Chinese person in like a party or social situation.” When probed further about what shaped this perspective when she was young, she said, “things I’d seen...like on the news or like a video (TikTok) that I’d seen somewhere that somebody shared or something.” Marie also traveled to China and admitted she held typical stereotypes surrounding Chinese people prior to the trip. She believed all Chinese people looked the same, in fact, she believed all Asians in general “looked the same.” Marie also confirmed she believed the stereotypical things portrayed in movie and cinema—kung fu and rice. All six participants seemed to be influenced heavily by media and media’s portrayal of difference places.

For some of the participants, absorbing the media’s portrayal of different people groups and cultures became ingrained with how the participant viewed different parts of the world. For instance, when asked about their perspective on how they felt about different people groups as a child, responses varied based on the media coverage and movies surrounding a particular region. Middle Easterners, Elizabeth said, would have made her feel “anxious and nervous, threatened.” She said she didn’t think “I really had too much of a distinguished feeling toward them” when asked about Europeans. When asked about Australians, she said she thought they “were cool...they were like surfing type people, all the time in the sun at the beach...adventurous.” When asked about Russians she said, “accents and how...up front they are or maybe intimidating.” When asked about Latin Americans she said, “those are my buddies...I’ve always kind of

wanted to be like them...I felt like they were the ideal human that a lot of people wanted to be like if that makes sense...they had long hair, they could speak another language.” This positive perspective is particularly interesting to note because Elizabeth had direct exposure to Latinos throughout her life and childhood. Reflecting on her childhood, she smiled as she recounted many stories about her Latino friends and seemed to hold them in a high regard compared to other cultural groups.

Engaging in this same exercise with Marie, similar answers were given, again suggesting movie and media held a heavy influence on the childhood perception of diverse groups. When asked about what the childhood version of Marie thought about the English she said, “proper.” When asked about South Africans Marie said “hardworking.” Relaxed was the word she used to describe Australians and strict was the word for Russians. When asked about Middle Easterners Marie said, “I want to say scary.” When asked to elaborate, Marie said, “I don’t think I would be fearful of them, it was just like this stigma and the first thing my mind went to was...bad.” Amelia also responded quick-fire to how her childhood brain would have thought about different groups of people. In response to what she thought about Russians, she said “Matryoshka dolls.” When asked about Germans she said “Anne Frank.” She said “a flag and like a motorcycle or something weird” when asked about Americans. When asked about South Africans, she said she “would have like pictured African, people of African descent.” When asked about Africans in general, she said, “I would have thought about people living like in huts and farming and stuff and like walking miles to get water with the things on their heads.” Surfing was the descriptor for Australians while English received

“a castle and...cold.” Like the others, Amelia also described the Middle East as “a scary place.”

Another factor that appeared to shape participants perspective of other locations was their schooling. Several participants indicated school was where they learned about certain events and places. Participants seemed to attach positive or negative emotions towards an entire country based on how specific events were discussed in class. Examples included Germany and the Holocaust, the conflict(s) in the Middle East, the Royal Wedding, the Olympics, and British Imperialism. The limited discussion of historical events in different geographical locations seemed to have the power to shape the perspective of the participants towards an entire people and cultural group residing in a given location. If the event studied in school was negative, i.e., Anne Frank, the Holocaust, and WWII Germany, then the thoughts toward that country also appeared to be negative. Conversely, the opposite also appeared to be true.

Through analyzing each participant’s childhood perceptions of different cultures, certain pieces of information became relevant. One, participants housed pre-conceived beliefs about not only the location they traveled but also other regions of the world. Next, participants seemed to gather these views mostly from various forms of media and within their educational institutions. Lastly, each participant showed a propensity to generalize people into major categories based on what they had learned from the aforementioned mediums. One purpose of this study was to see if participants could perceive change within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of their travel. Therefore, understanding their emotions towards different cultures prior to travel was imperative. The analysis above was to understand how participants felt

towards places and people around the globe participants did not have direct access to but relied heavily on secondary sources to construct their viewpoints. The next determinant of pre-trip cultural competency was to analyze how their childhood brain perceived diversity they did have direct exposure to.

Another layer to understanding a participant's cultural competency prior to travel was to explore the participant's perception of their childhood self and their appreciation for the diversity they had access to in their everyday lives. When asked, all six participants felt they had little exposure to diversity growing up and all six indicated the three main cultural groups they had access to within their communities were Black, Latino, and White. When asked what the earliest memories of interactions with those who were racially, culturally, or ethnically different than them, they each responded differently. Earlier in this section, I discussed participant's interaction with direct diversity in their participant profiles.

Based on the revelations within the data, and the perceived impact of both direct and indirect diversity on each of the six participants, all six participants had a low cultural competency prior to their first global travel experience. Sojourner and Amelia appeared to have the greatest amount of cultural competency prior to their travel experience, although their cultural competency was still extremely limited. This could be attributed to the fact they were exposed to the most diversity growing up and had the most direct access to cultural informants. In terms of demonstrating cultural competency, Sojourner's mother supported diversity within Sojourner's life through consistently engaging with different groups. Sojourner and Elizabeth were the only two of the six participants that spent the night at a different racial groups house. Although Amelia had

a perceived higher level of cultural competency compared to the others, her exposure to diversity was mostly through different racial and ethnic groups working for her family in a service capacity. This was also true of all the diversity Florence was exposed to. Sojourner and Joan both discussed their Spanish teachers throughout middle and high school leaving an imprint on them in regard to appreciation of diversity, each in different ways. Joan, Florence, Marie, and Elizabeth all indicated very low levels of cultural competency prior to their travel experience, with Joan having the lowest cultural competency of them all. However, after analyzing the data for each participant in terms of the participant's cultural competency for both direct and indirect diversity, all participants were found to be at the base point of the affective hierarchy when they engaged with reflecting their travel location. Therefore, in terms of answering RQ1: "What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience?" evidence supported all participants had low to no cultural competency.

RQ2: Factors Shaping the Cultural Experience during Global Travel

Research question two states, *How do participants describe their experience with global travel during adolescence?* The purpose of this particular research question was to investigate the perceptions of the adolescent global travel experience upon reflection. This question was designed to explore how participants reflected back on a global travel experience they took during adolescence and how they engaged with their first global travel experience. This included significant moments, interactions, feelings, or discoveries participants discussed in their reflections. To investigate the aforementioned, face to face interviews with participants were conducted and recorded. Interview recordings were then transcribed and analyzed by identifying central themes, common

phrases, or comments that were common across all participants. Similarly, online discussions were transcribed and analyzed for central ideas, common phrases and comments. An analysis of the discussion group was then conducted to explore connections with the face-to-face interviews. After analyzing data, several prominent themes emerged. Narrowing down the data into chunks, the five themes that emerged for research question two were: infrastructure, language interactions, monetary interactions, meals, and peace of mind. These five themes broadly encompass the many common ideas indicated through the interviews and the online focus forum. Through strategically placing similar ideas into broader categories, the themes were created. Table 4 indicates the frequency in which participants reflected on the categories and themes discovered in the data.

Table 4*Frequency in which participants referenced the following Affective Development**Indicators for RQ2*

Category	Common Emergent Themes	Frequency
	Hotels	7
	Infrastructure	19
	Transportation	17
Infrastructure	Pollution/Smog	5
	Restrooms	8
	Language Barrier	44
	Communicative Technology	8
Language	English Signs/Symbolism	7
	Money Issues	7
	Presence of Africans	10
Monetary	“Hagglers”	12
	Food - Water	15
Meals	Portion Size	5
	The Group as Comfort	9
Peace of Mind	Trust in Leader	7

Common themes and example statements addressing research question two from Phase I, the face-to-face interviews, and Phase II, the online discussion group, are listed below in Table 5.

Table 5*Summaries of Categories, Themes, and Examples for Adolescent Global Travel*

Category	Theme	Examples (with commonly associated emotions)
Infrastructure	Architectural style and landscape	I liked the buildings there because it looked more like the paintings and stuff that you see. It looked more like that romantic type of feel. (Elizabeth, Interview #2)
	Public transportation systems	I...couldn't quite grasp that we knew the right train to get on or the direction that it was going to take us...I just remember waiting there for the right train and I remember the tickets, you had to purchase the right one cause I think they all took you to different places within the area (Sojourner, Interview #2)
	Toilet facilities	You said, "you squat on the toilet" and I was like what do you mean? So, then I walked in there and I walked right back out because there was no way I was using that restroom...I just could not believe my eyes...there were footprints on the ground to indicate where you

		put your feet to actually squat over the floor (Sojourner, Interview #2)
	Housing (hotels)	Everything was a small scale, the rooms were smaller, the bathrooms...everything American size would be like extra-large over there (Marie, Interview #2)
Language	“All I know is English”	The first time in my life where English isn’t the primary language, so all the signs were in French or you know various other languages and I was like...how am I going to fit in here, how am I going to get around? (Joan, Interview #2) I wouldn’t even be able to communicate with nobody, like, absolutely nothing (Florence, Interview #2)
	English signs and symbols	When we were there, I saw signs that had three different languages to accommodate a lot of different people, so I think that was one thing that stood out (Sojourner, Interview #2) I was comparing their signs to our signs and I was like well, I wonder if this sign means the

		same thing that it does in America (Elizabeth, Interview #2)
Nonverbal communication		Laughs are universal, so that was easy, a smile or that eye contact to say yeah, we are on the same page, it was really nice. (Sojourner, Interview #2)
		A lot of Chinese people would come up to (me) with smiles on their faces (Marie, Interview #2)
		I think he knew by the smile on my face that I wasn't a stranger, and he did let me like hug on him and take a picture with him (Marie, Interview #2)
Two communicative roles of technology		At some point I used Google Translate and I remember looking on Snap Maps you know, wondering where are we at, geographically, you know how you can zoom out and look at where you are on the map (Florence, Interview #2)
Monetary interactions with "hagglers"	Slick and aggressive Africans	He was very slick with it...without us even noticing he was putting something on her and then with a switch...he turned into a different person...you owe me money now and that's when you stepped in and...you really knew

how to put him in his place and...he was a bit aggressive and we could tell whatever he said was not nice...as we got closer to the city scene there were other people that were haggling us...I'm glad that happened with you there...if we had been along when that happened, I don't know what would have happened (Sojourner, Interview #2)

Knockoffs in a secret room

Them taking us to that shady like stairwell...was interesting because I was like is this something we are gonna go up here and the government's gonna be waiting on us or are we gonna be in there and the government bust up in there and arrest somebody (Marie, Interview #2)

Meals

“It (the food) was not right”

I didn't like when they tried to make lasagna...I think they put like lamb in it (Amelia, Interview #2)

Drinking water and ice

They didn't have ice either (Marie, Interview #2)

My first culture shock...was the ice and the drinks and the proportions and stuff...how vastly different it was from America (Florence, Interview #2)

Smaller portion and healthy lifestyles (in China)

Everything for them was on a smaller scale, the plates were smaller, cups were smaller (Marie, Interview #2)

Restaurant experiences

The whole family aspect of eating together (Florence, Interview #2)

Everything gets brought out at one time and instead of being rude when somebody's having a conversation...it's on a lazy Susan (a turntable device put on a table to aid in distributing food) so if you want something...instead of interrupting somebody...you just turn the thing and get as much as you want (Florence, Interview #2)

Peace of Mind

Trusting the Leader

I feel like I trusted him because I trusted you and I knew you wouldn't just let any and everybody be around us. You'd done your research and stuff like that so, the fact you were

ok with him meant that I was ok with him
(Elizabeth, Interview #2)

Traveling as a Group I am...a natural worrier so I was always focused on my buddy, so I always made sure I had him like right there next to me (Joan, Interview #1)

Category 1: Infrastructure

The first category, *Infrastructure*, was easily identifiable in data, as all six participants discussed the infrastructure of each location explored. A country's infrastructure is considered the "physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise" (Market Business News, 2022). Emergent themes associated with *infrastructure* included the recognition of differences within certain cities, transportation systems, toilet facilities, and the style and types of hotels participants had access to. Also included in this category was any discussion of architectural styles mentioned throughout the interviews or online discussions. Throughout the interviews, several participants recalled the visual differences within the appearance of various geographical locations compared to their home country.

Architectural Style and Landscape. All participants acknowledged differences among the architecture and age of the cities, particularly travelers to Europe. Elizabeth expressed reverence for European architecture describing it as more romantic than American architecture. Amelia expounded further on recognizing architectural differences in Europe by claiming, "I feel like Greece, was just like really old and really

pretty as is...everything was just very, old and kind of dirty, but it was still cool.” Joan shared a similar sentiment when she stated,

I remember recognizing the differences in the buildings because most of them are older than what I’m used to seeing or how, like the landscapes were done differently so just like the visual differences from what I’m like used to seeing.

When Joan was asked which architecture she preferred, she claimed, “I didn’t really see one as better than the other, you could just tell there’s a lot more history in the European cities.” She continued by saying, “everything looked a little bit like worn down because it was older, so to me, it automatically looked a little bit dirtier and less clean even if it, in actuality, like wasn’t.”

Sojourner added to this change in scenery when she stated, “We saw a castle. I mean a real castle, like out of fairytale um that yeah, that was a really great moment.” She furthered commented on visual differences in European cities with the comment,

All of the cobblestone was very intriguing, I was so used to paved roads and yes, there are some major cities that used cobblestone, but for the most part we (USA) are all paved, but they still use a lot of cobble.

Outside of Europe, travelers that explored China also agreed there were visual differences in architecture relative to what they were used to. Florence discussed the skylines that exist in China. Florence stated:

All the highways were like six, seven, eight lane highways and all these fancy cars and their tags on the cars looked different...Beijing reminded me of New York with like the really tall, tall, insanely large buildings and all the smog and seeing people on their scooters...and I guess it hit me in that moment like holy

crap, like this is nothing like the United States, this is already completely different with the way we do things and how a city looks and transportation and stuff like that.

The responses above from participants indicate all of them were intrigued by the visual differences among their host countries and their home country.

Public Transportation System. With all the participants coming from rural areas with no real public transportation and surrounded by rural highways and road systems, another noticeable infrastructure classification among participants was the transportation systems, such as subways, trains, ferries. Sojourner described her experience with the train system by saying, “I was a little scared because it seemed like you could just drop down on the two tracks if someone accidentally pushed or you tripped, so I thought that was interesting.”

Joan affirmed this sentiment when she declared,

I guess the biggest thing I remember is getting on their transportation system for the first time because it was obviously like if you got left behind, I mean it was just super hard to find your location based on what stops they got off on and there were tons of people around.

Joan also recalled the tour director giving her a reference point in order to get back to a specific location. She discussed this by saying,

The very first time we were going to get on the subway, Saul (tour director) talked about if you do get separated always go to embankment because that’s the main spot...and I tried to grasp my bearings...trying to memorize the layout just in case I were to have gotten lost.

Another method of transportation Joan recalled was the night train. She described this as “very sketchy” and “the train in the middle of the night kind of stressed me out because I was like kind of off my guard sleeping so I just, that stressed me out.” When probed to explain further, Joan elaborated by saying, “we didn’t know if we were going to have any more random people come into our little room or not throughout the night.” Another participant, Elizabeth, who also experienced a night train on her trip said this:

Yeah, I thought the overnight train was gonna be better than what it was. It was very cramped and like the couches or whatever it was we were laying on was hard as hell um, it was very uncomfortable cause we had to sleep with our luggage and stuff. And then there was six of us in a little room. It was very cramped, there was no room for anything.

Amelia also noticed differences in the transportation within her travel experience. She took a ferry from one country to another and was nervous about the ride, due mainly to passports not being checked. She stated, “I was about to start crying because I was so nervous.” The reflection on differences among public transportation systems within the new country indicate participants were recognizing differences exist and the opportunity for a deeper understanding of diversity was available.

Toilet Facilities. While discussing basic functions and the nature of toilets in different parts of the world, participants noticed a significant difference in the way the restrooms were organized and how interactions took place within them. The major differences noted were squatter toilets, sanitation issues within toilets, paying to use public restrooms, and self-cleaning restrooms.

When discussing toilets, Sojourner noted her first experience with a squatter toilet:

I walked in there and I walked right back out because there was no way I was using that restroom...I just could not believe my eyes, that this was a bathroom. I remember there were footprints on the ground to indicate where you put your feet to actually squat over the floor and it was very apparent. The first thing I remember is the smell. You couldn't even walk in without the smell hitting you and my eyes immediately started to water...I said I just have to hold it and you were like are you sure and I said yes, and I remember I was very quiet on that ride to our next location.

Later in that same interview, Sojourner elaborated on the European restrooms with more understanding, stating "it just helped to pay for the cleaning and the maintenance."

Florence had a similar reaction when she engaged with her first squatter saying, "they were very, very low to the ground...I just remember them being a lot smaller and I think they had the bidet thing on there."

Joan also discussed the toilet facilities and how she was challenged to think about how different people do things differently. Joan elaborated when she stated,

I remember whenever we would go into certain restrooms there would be people in there...that was kind of their job to keep the bathrooms clean or help you with drying your hands. I just remember those people always being extra friendly, I guess that's how they made their living.

When asked about having to pay for public restrooms, Joan stated:

I had never experienced that before, so I was like, what if you don't have any change on you? It was a whole thing that I had to think about that I'd never had to, a thought I'd never had cross my mind before.

While discussing bathrooms further, Joan acknowledged there were different types of restrooms available within the same country. Joan continued to discuss restrooms by stating, "There was a bathroom in the middle of the city and it was almost like the floor, they would close it and then it would clean itself before you could go back in." Elizabeth also noted the self-cleaning toilets stating, "the bathrooms were like port-a-potties and the floor was open and it self-cleans every time somebody uses it...that was in the middle of the city though, because I remember we were looking at stores whenever we saw that." The reflection on differences within restroom facilities overseas opened up dialogue to explore the why behind the different systems. The participants who chose to explore why countries may do things differently than America opened up the window of opportunity for participants to explore affective development.

Housing (Hotels). Another element of infrastructure discussed was the description of hotels. Marie discussed both differences and concern regarding hotels in her travel experience. This is obvious in her statement:

Well, I remember the night we got there we, you know, got to the hotel, put everything in and I mean right off the bat you notice that hotels are different. I remember Lindsey (tour director) telling us that there's only certain hotels that Americans can stay in and that freaked me out, I was like why, why can we only stay at certain hotels. What's wrong with the other ones? Is there something that the country itself is hiding, like why? What can we not see? What don't they

want us to know about them that makes us only be able to have access to certain hotels?

Elizabeth also noted a difference with hotels stating, “a lot of the hotels we stayed in were kind of like, have you been in the Ramada’s before? It was like that but worse...it was very tacky.” Florence also noted another difference in hotels with her statement,

We had to have the hotel key in the wall unit to be able to work the A/C...they only give you one key so as soon as you leave your hotel room’s back to being 90 degrees because they’re conserving energy.

Amelia also acknowledged notable differences within hotels when she said,

When we were in our first hotel, I was kind of freaked out, because I was thinking it was going to be like a hotel that looked like a, you know, American hotels, they like churn them out and they all look the same. But this place was like an old house, an old town house and...I felt like we were in this dingy room...I was like, ok, I just gotta roll with it.

Infrastructure was one way participants were able to identify visual differences existed within the operational systems of different global locations. Based on participant responses, it is clear certain elements of a different country’s infrastructure, namely toilets, hotels, and certain transportation methods worked to push participants into a potentially uncomfortable situation, which can be the catalyst for transformative change within an individual. Additionally, exposure to elements of a county’s infrastructure can help build an appreciation for different ways of doing things. Certain participants were able to demonstrate their movement from the first through the third stage of affective development through their reflections on this broad category of infrastructure. Most of

the time, the participants discussed the differences of the locations, but sometimes a participant would give an understanding or justification of why they believed a country did certain things. Those justifications are evidence participants were growing in their affective and their recognition of differences in infrastructure was a medium with which affective movement could occur.

Category 2: Language

A major element of the global travel experience for all participants was the second category, *Language*. The data was abundant and evident through all three interviews, with a notable focus on the responses from interview two. Participants described many details regarding the language barrier present in global travel, the comfort of English signs, the relief of universal symbolism, the necessity of tone, smiling, and body language, and lastly the use of assistive technology for translations.

“All I Know Is English.” A prominent moment for all participants was the moment they each realized they had lost control. This moment occurred for each participant and was primarily the moment they realized they had zero ability to communicate outside of their tour group. When discussing that moment, Marie said:

I realized how uneducated I was in that you know it would have been so awesome to have been bilingual or versed in other languages because if you were to take me and drop me off in China like I could not figure my way out. And so, that was kind, I kind of was like dang, like you know maybe I should take initiative on my own to learn about other countries and their languages and their culture because here I am so sheltered and all I know is English. I couldn't imagine I was literally standing in China...because it gets so real when you get off the plane.

Florence also had a similar description when reflecting on her moment of losing control, saying:

As soon as we step off the airplane I mean just overhearing, just Chinese people speak in their language is like, I would even, not even begin to know what they are saying because it's not words, it's sounds and then you know of course seeing all the signs, they're calligraphy type language doesn't even look like a B in regular alphabet. Cause you can't even try to piece stuff together. Um, but you know just like hearing people in the bathroom and sitting here thinking well, you know if I don't if I get lost or if I can't find the bathroom you know, you ask somebody. And then I'm thinking oh, well I'm screwed because who am I going to talk to, I don't know this person or these people, like am I going to have to utilize google translate?

Another participant, Sojourner tried to manage the language barrier unsuccessfully by turning to a language she had studied in school. Her description was,

I have to admit I think the first thing I did was do the American thing where we try to talk English slowly, like that's supposed to help. Then I tried to draw on my Spanish skills from class um, which was horrible, but I tried and then I remember...having a little dictionary and it wasn't working because it was too slow trying to flip through the pages.

Amelia said the moment hit her “in the Vatican gift shop, I left my water in there and I went back in to get it and they didn't understand and so I just left.” Joan also discussed this particular moment by saying,

(It was) the first time in my life where English wasn't the primary language, so all the signs were in French, or you know various other languages and I...felt like how am I going to fit in here, how am I going to get around?

Each participant claimed to immediately realize language was going to be something each person would have to overcome to enjoy their global travel experience. The language barrier appeared to be the most obvious recognition of diversity among the participants and some participants, like Marie, wished they had the ability to converse. Therefore, evidence emerged from the data to support some participants were moving into more of an appreciation of diversity through this element of global travel.

English Signs and Symbols. To find ways around the language barrier participants began to explore different methods. One of those methods was looking for English signs and symbols that were universally recognized. Some participants were able to make inferences around signs and symbols and others struggled a bit more. Elizabeth said, "I was comparing their signs to our signs and I was like...I wonder if this sign means the same thing that it does in America." Joan described signs as different than what she was used to seeing stating, "the road signs and the writing on the roads, I was like this is completely foreign to me." Sojourner said, "the signs were in a different language and so I was confused on how everyone knew where to go." Florence also commented on the signs saying, "all the signs and everything being in a language that I can't interpret what that means...and thinking how do they read these signs because it...almost looks like shapes and stuff and...how do they read this, I mean they're not letters." How much English was present within each global location seemed to be a

determinant in whether participants felt as though they could accurately interpret signs and symbols.

Nonverbal Communication. Another way travelers indicated they adjusted to the language barrier was through motions, gestures, tone, smiling, and body language. Sojourner described one experience of trying to order food by saying, “we just kind of started playing charades.” Another example Sojourner described was trying to find a location on a map and stopping a native to ask directions. She said “pointing at maps...to figure out where to go.” Sojourner claimed she developed more confidence by the end of the trip and said, “I found myself listening...you just have this feeling inside that you understand, and you can pretty much pick up on...what the person is trying to say to you.” She further elaborated when she said, “share a laugh, laughs are universal so, that was easy, a smile or that eye contact to say yeah, we are on the same page, it was really nice.”

Sojourner continued by saying, “after I kept having...positive interactions, I realized there was nothing to be scared of...and the most a stranger is going to do is just not smile back...(then) I wasn’t scared to talk to anyone.” Florence echoed this belief when she said she would “point or use pictures...I remember saying that I, you know, pointed I want a big drink, like big.” Marie supports this sentiment with her description of communicating through “hand gestures, pointing, numbers.” A moment for Marie that transcended language was on the Great Wall interacting with a father and his son. About this interaction Marie said:

I think my favorite thing was...an interaction I had with a little Chinese kid and he just...made my heart melt...I actually have pictures with him on my laptop,

but it was just so sweet and his dad, I think, was standing right next to us and they were...I think his dad was like drawing or engraving stones for money as people/tourist would pass by on the Great Wall and it was just crazy to me how he's sitting there probably making a living for himself and his kid. And his kid's just standing there with him...but that kid had no idea what I was you know saying to him or anything. He was just, he was really sweet, and I think he knew by the smile on my face that I wasn't a stranger, and he did let me like hug on him and take a picture with him and that kind of thing.

Marie's interactive moment was one example of many where participants were able to transcend the language barrier with newly learned abilities. Sojourner also had a similar experience with teenagers playing soccer in Spain and describing that interaction as a highlight of her trip. Florence had an experience with Chinese girls on the Great Wall and with students at a Chinese school. Many of the top memorable moments for participants were ones where language was limited, but moments where humans were interacting with each other in mutual curiosity and respect. Nonverbal communication was an area where each participant described a fond memory. The reflections on this element lent themselves to the idea participants were moving into level four of affective development, organization. This level of development required the participant to organize new information into their already existing attitudes and emotions towards others. This nonverbal element appeared to offer the opportunity for strong emotional moments to occur and therefore, led to significant change within an individual's affective development.

Translation Technology. Translation technology was something more accessible to recent travelers. Some participants were able to utilize technology like google translate in an attempt to communicate with natives. Marie described her first interactive moments by saying, “at one point some of us might have like gotten on our phones and tried to translate or something.” Marie also claimed global corporations “were so advanced in technology even more so than the US...when we went to go eat...they had those screens where you didn’t necessarily have to interact with somebody.” Florence echoed this with her story:

I remember...the Chinese girls following me on the Great Wall, they used google translate with me...they came up and tapped me on the shoulder and then like looked down at their phone and you know they were asking to take a picture with me. They had theirs (Google translate) in Chinese...they google translated Chinese to English, and it said, you know the grammar was a little off but...picture, picture.

Translation technology is something that could potentially both help and hinder the transformative experience. If travelers can turn to computers instead of humans to perform a task, the likelihood of them feeling uncomfortable may be reduced, and this could ultimately diminish their chance of transformative learning. For example, Florence used translation technology to enhance communication between herself and a native, but Marie used a touch screen checkout at a restaurant, negating the opportunity for interpersonal communication she would have otherwise experienced. With the reflections on the impact of nonverbal communication appearing so valuable to

increasing cultural competency, it would seem essential a future global travel experience would need to maximize as many human interactive opportunities as possible.

Category 3: Monetary Interactions with the “hagglers”

Another fundamental element of all the participants first global travel experience was *Monetary Interactions*. This category became evident through participants detailing of currency exchange and negotiation patterns. Several participants described negotiators as “hagglers,” persistently bargaining others to purchase something. Some interactions with the hagglers were initiated by the participants, while other interactions were more of a pressure to consume by the haggler. Regardless, each participant had to figure out on their own how to exchange currency, relatively understand currency exchange value, and interact with a seller.

Hagglers in Europe: Slick and Aggressive Africans. Outside of the initial cultural shock of the airport, one participant’s first interaction was an interesting one. Sojourner stepped off the bus and described her experience with a haggler she referred to throughout the interview as the “bracelet man.” She detailed the interaction as:

He was very slick with it...he was like oh, so beautiful, so beautiful and then he kind of just put the bracelet on Becky (another student traveler) without us even noticing that he was putting something on her and then within a flip of a coin he turned into a different person, asking for money. Becky was like oh, no, no, no, you can get this back, I don’t want this and he was like no, no, no, you owe me money now and then that’s when you stepped in and to our surprise you know, really put him in his place and then he was a little bit aggressive and we could tell whatever he said was not nice, but I do remember I’m kind of appreciative that

happened as soon as we got off the bus because as we went closer into the city scene there were other people that were haggling us and at that point we knew to just give them a stern no...and it pretty much worked out. If we had been alone when that happened, I don't know what would have happened.

Joan described a similar experience on her trip saying,

We had this group of people trying to sell us stuff, came and like surrounded us and we were trying hard to get out and so, I was like we don't want anything, please just leave and they were just saying certain things.

When asked to describe who these people were, Joan described them as "Black Europeans...with heavy accents." When asked to describe how these "hagglers" made her feel, Joan elaborated by saying, "nervous because I was like I don't really know if I need to get up and leave...if they're gonna follow me or what's the best route to get out of this situation." She furthered stated, "it made me feel really out of place, people know I'm not from here, I don't belong here and so, it just made me nervous to try and like communicate and just have normal conversation."

Joan described a second interaction where "hagglers" were "following us, trying to do scams and he (Saul - the tour director) threw his clipboard into the river (in frustration)...stuff like that is so foreign (to me), like I don't have to deal with that here (USA), but it happened all the time (over there) and just to see how casually he handled it was fascinating to me." Sojourner also acknowledged race when talking about Black immigrants in Europe. Sojourner described seeing Black people in Europe as "a kind of identity crisis" for her as a Black woman. In relationship to monetary interactions, Sojourner said:

I didn't expect to see Africans at some of these locations...I could see that they were hustling a lot, so like their way of making money was not the traditional way like with what the other, I guess natives, were doing because I remember they had blankets out in the street and they had little trinkets and they were trying to sell it and negotiate different prices.

She elaborated, "besides me and Becky, I don't remember seeing any other Black people that weren't like the ones selling items on the sidewalk. The feeling I had was I guess confusion." Elizabeth also noted what she referred to as "Africans" who "were harassing the mess out of us trying to get us to buy stuff and I remember Saul telling us that you shouldn't even look at them because then they will try to sell us stuff." She continued saying:

A guy chased me...trying to sell me a Bob Marley...painting or something like that. I was like my brother would love that and I guess he heard it and so, he literally followed us down to the restaurant that we went to, and I think it was Saul that told him to leave us alone. He literally followed us...talking about yeah, yeah, I'll give you a deal on this and he kept going down on the price and everything. And I was nah, I don't want it, I don't want it...Saul saw him and was like she doesn't want it, go away...but um, that was definitely scary.

Amelia would have affirmed Saul's advice, as she said she learned "instead of trying to communicate and be like I don't have any money...just kind of like ignore." She justified this by saying:

They did it to everyone. Small vendors on the street who would really want you to come and buy stuff and jack up their prices because you're American...I

definitely learned quickly they knew where we came from. They knew we would buy stuff so I knew they raised prices, so to be more skeptical of that...just kind of ignoring people that would just sit out there and yell at people walking by all day.

Hagglers in China: Knockoffs in a Secret Room. While the European travelers identified street people trying to make monetary transactions with them, the participants who traveled to China dealt with an additional type of challenge. The two travelers to China, Florence and Marie, traveled together on the same trip in 2019 and were asked if they wanted to go to a secret place where designer bags were sold for reduced prices. Both travelers, Florence and Marie, participated in that adventure and then subsequently questioned the ethics and legality of it. Florence said,

This is what somebody does for a living is selling fake counterfeit goods, portraying them as if they're thousands and thousands worth. They are doing that...is that ethically or legally right, no, but they're doing what they can to provide for their family.”

She further suggested justifying her own ability to negotiate a better price by stating,

If you think about it, were they trying to take advantage of us because we were foreigners to them?...then you can haggle them...I think they did that (walked us by a room with several small children living on a mattress of a floor full of dirty laundry) to take advantage of us

Marie questioned the whole encounter upon reflection, stating,

I was like is this something we're gonna go up here and the government's gonna be waiting on us or are we gonna be in there and the government bust up in there

and arrest somebody...I guess I was wondering is this legal...because it was a secret room.

Marie also struggled with the negotiation aspect of travel, claiming,

There were a couple of times when I was more comfortable negotiating than others...it's like I had to feel the situation, feel out the person and see if I could talk them down, I don't know, I'm not very good at this (negotiating a price).

Additionally, both travelers were warned by their Chinese tour guide that merchants would give change in another Asian country's currency, currency that was heavily depreciated against the Chinese Yuan. About this particular issue, Florence stated, "it just shows you how much they're willing to do to make a dime." Marie's response to this was,

I think I always checked to make sure they counted right...I mean...you go take a shot at it and hope that you get the right money back, you know, do your best to check it out and see what it looks like.

Monetary transactions were interactions each participant made during their global travel experience. Despite participants spanning two different continents, a theme of haggling occurred, with negotiations not normally experienced in their home country occurred. Some participants reflected with a wariness, others reflected with a sense of empathy, and some participants left with a newfound confidence in making transactions. Regardless of the experience, monetary interactions proved to be a major element all the participants reflected on in detail, suggesting the importance of understanding these types of interactions in grasping meaning among adolescent travelers.

Category 4: Meals

The fourth category, *Meals*, focuses on the mealtime habits the participants described in the types of food, drinking water, availability of ice portion sizes, and table settings.

“It (the Food) Was Not Right.” For each participant, exposure to new food or food they didn’t realize had different variations was a big part of their cultural experience. Joan, a self-described “very picky eater” said, “I was always nervous to order any type of food or drink because I didn’t want to have any meat or cheese...and obviously cheese is everywhere.” Another participant, Florence, said:

The very first night I remember very vividly the restaurant we ate at, as soon as you walked in the doors there was aquariums of toad frogs. So, kind of killed my appetite there, but with the food...I didn’t know what the heck it was...we were all very curious to what it was, so we tried to ask ‘what is this’ but then again, the language barrier, they said whatever it was in Chinese, but I mean it didn’t even look like anything we have in America. I mean like nowhere near it and it’s not like we know what’s in it because we can’t communicate. I’m saying that’s what was frustrating because...I’m already picky enough but if...I can’t tell by looking at it what it is I’m not gonna eat it. I was on a sticky rice diet. It wasn’t just the way it looked, it was the texture, the color...I’m glad I brought snacks in my suitcase.

Marie also said she was nervous about the food, noting the differences between reality and expectation. She said,

I remember letting you...try everything before everybody else did. So...night one was definitely like ok, this is not Chinese food as I know it. This is authentic Chinese food, and I don't know what's in it, I don't know what the outside's made of. I don't know what I'm about to drink.

Amelia also stated,

In Greece there was this weird pasta dish, it was not right. I loved Greece, I did not like the food. Pizza was awesome, it was always good in Italy. Lot of gelato. Greece - I really like the authentic salad, but I didn't like when they tried to make lasagna, I think they tried to put lamb in it.

Elizabeth expressed a similar sentiment when describing trying to eat cereal, but not having cow's milk as she was accustomed. She said, "it may have been goat's milk...cause I remember I was like ugh, we don't really want this and...we tasted it, but we didn't really eat it." These reflective comments on food is indicative participants were introduced to things they were not used to, perhaps not comfortable with, and challenged to move outside of their comfort zones.

Drinking Water and Ice. Another theme in this category was related to drinking water and ice. Florence was confused when she realized, "they (restaurants in China) had no ice or no, when we think cold here...we are thinking so cold your drink has sweat pouring off." She continued exploring this stating, "I felt privileged in America. It soon became very clear, how good we have it in America because we have ice and we can have cold drinks." She continued, "I think that was the biggest, that was my first cultural shock, the ice and the drinks and the proportions and stuff of how vastly different it was from America."

Marie also struggled with water and ice in China claiming, “something about the ice, they didn’t have ice either because of the water.” Marie said, “it was like three bucks for like a bottle of water on the bus.” She continued, “it’s scarce” and “they didn’t believe in drinking the ice water, it was bad for you.” At one location Marie said, “their water was significantly colder than all the rest and I think they had ice cubes but when they gave it to you it was like two cubes and you were done.”

Joan also noted the ice not being a common occurrence in Europe. She said, “the biggest thing I remember is...there not being any ice.” Sojourner also confirmed this noticeable difference stating, “I don’t think they use a lot of ice either, so me asking for ice and them looking at me like um, sorry sweetie we don’t have ice” was a moment she realized things were not the same as her home country. Further, Sojourner also commented on the type of water saying, “that was the first time I had seen there was a distinction between still water and sparkling water and I tried sparkling water and hated it.”

Smaller Portion and Healthy Lifestyles (in China). Another aspect of meals consistent throughout the interviews was portion sizes, particularly within the participants who traveled to China. Marie noted this when she stated, “everything was a small scale...restaurants...everything American size would be like extra-large over there.” She said, “everywhere we went it was buffet style. Like multiple options and then back to the whole scale thing, everything for them was on a smaller scale. The plates were smaller, cups were smaller.” Florence confirmed this when she said, “the proportions, even with the drinks were a lot smaller: the plates, the cups, the tea glasses, everything.”

Both participants concluded the Chinese were much healthier than Americans based on what they described as a healthier overall lifestyle including portion size, type of food eaten, exercise, and medicinal beliefs. Florence stated:

It's very obvious...based on their portion size and what kind of food they eat and how they eat it, along with their medical/cultural beliefs...the whole yin and yang thing and also...they're very active, I mean I don't remember where we were at...some kind of local park or something like that. I'm seeing like seventy, eighty year old men and women out there doing jumping jacks and sit-ups and pull ups. It made me think about just, you know, their whole...notion of mind, body and spirit...their body is literally a temple and they make that known just by...we were just...observing their everyday life you know, playing cards with friends or doing tai chi early in the morning. Watching somebody eat, like it's just really cool that they take so much pride in their health.

Marie also said, "I did realize that obviously there is a big discrepancy health wise just from the sizes of food servings and you know the whole cup thing and portions. Enough to be like they really care about their wellbeing." She also mentioned the parks, saying, "their park is like a gym...it's not like swing and seesaw...there's an ab machine over here and you can do your legs over here." Both travelers indicated a significant amount of appreciation for what they perceived to be the Chinese emphasis on health.

Restaurant Experiences. Another aspect of meals that emerged throughout the interviews was the concept of how meals were consumed and how restaurant personnel interacted with the participants.

Restaurants in Europe: Relaxed, Warm, and Enjoyable

Joan said,

A lot more places being outside...the majority of people would always try and get outside seating, and they would just kind of like sit there and it would be an evening thing, they weren't rushed, they were just sitting there enjoying each other's company.

Joan further claimed she was jealous of this style of eating stating, "I was a little bit envious...they just seemed so relaxed and actually got to enjoy their time and it's not, you know, like rushing all the time." Sojourner was so impressed by restaurant interactions. She said,

I remember we went to a restaurant and there was this nice older guy who owned it...he was very sweet, very sweet and just very warm, like he was a very warm person. I honestly didn't want to leave his restaurant and I was actually sad we couldn't take a second stop at his spot."

Again, later in the interview, she noted this restaurant and interaction with the owner as one of the top three moments on her trip. She described people she interacted with at restaurants as "just showed a lot of patience and didn't try to rush us in our decisions."

Interesting to note here is these positive interactions led Sojourner to claim,

I think when I got back (to the United States) and started learning about how discriminatory I guess people can be towards women of color and different

demographics, I was very shocked because I was like wow, that was not my experience thankfully, because everyone (in Europe) was so sweet.

Restaurants in China: Family-Like, Buffet Style

The two who went to China both observed meals eaten at round tables and with a “lazy Susan” style buffet (a circular tray that rotates for easy access to food), which left the travelers feeling a higher sense of community around eating. Florence was so impressed by this style of interaction she stated:

It made me appreciate their culture because I am a very family oriented type person and it really grinds my gears that my own family...we don't sit down and have dinner together...it's not a together thing and I feel like every meal should be shared. Everybody can take away parts of their day and stuff like that but in China you know your whole family sits down and all the food is brought out. It's on a lazy Susan so, if you want something...you just turn the thing.

At another point in the interviews, when asked what unique cultural tradition she really liked, she again referred to the dinners saying, “I would say the whole family aspect of eating together.” Although Florence really struggled with the type of foods introduced to her on the trip, she really came to appreciate the method of meals she engaged *on tour*. Marie, the other traveler who went to China, also noticed the style of meals. She said, “we went to a restaurant, and it was like a really nice one and we all sat at round tables and it was really fun.” She further noted, “everywhere we went it was buffet style.”

Through analyzing the responses surrounding meals, one can clearly see how some participants moved into a deep appreciation for other cultures based on healthy eating and a more familial mealtime style of eating. Conversely, some participants

struggled with understanding the differences particularly between water and ice in their host countries versus America.

Category 5: Strategies for Navigating New Environments

The last emergent theme for research question two was how participants were able to manage their nerves while on their first global travel experience. Naturally, a global experience assumes certain implications that participants will be required to engage with discomfort. Elements of discomfort for participants were discussed previously: learning how to communicate, dealing with hagglers, and eating unknown foods, to mention a few. Therefore, this category referred to strategies' travelers used to stay grounded and calm abroad. These tactics mostly included trust in the travel leader, always having a partner, and belonging to a whole group of travelers.

Trusting the Travel Leaders. The most notable peace of mind tactic for each traveler was having trust in the group leader and the tour company's tour director. Each participant had built a relationship with me over the course of at least one year in the classroom and their parents knew me from the school community. When participants were asked if they were nervous about leaving the airport and starting the trip, each traveler responded with a similar sentiment. Amelia said she just, "trusted the process." Joan said, "trust in the group because I knew my parents wouldn't have let me go if they didn't have trust in them...and I already knew you for like two years." Sojourner responded, "because you were our guide, and I was trusting that you knew what you were doing." Elizabeth said, "I feel like I trusted him (tour director) because I trusted you and I knew you would not just let any and everybody be around us." Florence responded to the question with a simple, "you." Marie also responded similarly stating, "I think I just

trusted you...and I was just like let's go." Perhaps these comments speak to the importance of a developed relationship between the group leader and the potential traveler as the catalyst for an individual to engage in global travel as an adolescent.

Traveling as a Group. The second major calming strategy participants used was the power of the group. Elizabeth really relied on both the tour director and the power of the group as a self-calming technique. She said she was always making sure she knew where her group was and was always scared. She said, "I remember staying right up next to Saul (tour director) like most of the time." Sojourner said, "if we were looking for something and we couldn't necessarily find it...because we were all in the same area, we would just happen to bump into someone else from our group and just seeing a familiar face calmed whatever nerves we may have been going through." Joan said, "because I'm a natural worrier...I was always focused on...my buddy so I always made sure I had him like right there next to me."

Although this theme did not have a lot of direct quotes and direct discussion associated with it, this theme showed up in several places indirectly. In each of the monetary interactions listed in category three where participants were dealing with "hagglers," they were with a group of a minimum of three students. This information is relevant because all of the participants indicated they were personally nervous in most situations where haggling and negotiation was concerned. As individuals became part of a larger group, they found more security and safety within that group, and this was something both explicitly stated and implied throughout the interviews.

Some participants self-described as naturally more shy and anxious than others. Some participants self-described as being very outgoing and up for anything. These two

personalities really showed up in this particular theme. Depending on how outgoing an individual naturally was, the less reliant on the group for comfort the individual seemed to be. Nevertheless, both personality sets described moments of anxiety, realization of loss of control, and nervousness in different scenarios. Therefore, all participants used at least one of the two aforementioned strategies to stay grounded in their travel experience.

Summarizing Research Question Two

Research question two was developed to determine what moments, interactions, engagements, and emotions really stood out to each participant during their global travel experience. Determining the emergent themes surrounding how participants engaged with global travel was then used to understand how participants made meaning of their first global travel experience taken during adolescence. To summarize, all participants found infrastructure, barriers to communication, monetary transactions, meals, and strategies for coping with uncomfortable situations to be the most important variables. Within each of these categories, themes were explored to highlight what moments were critical to affective growth among participants. Based on findings from research question two, human interactions seemed to not only be the most memorable moments among participants, but also seemed to have the most impact on attitude changes toward diversity.

RQ3: Patterns of Cultural Development Due to Global Travel

Research question three states, *“How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence?”* The purpose of research question three was to retrospectively gauge the traveler’s level of perceived attitudinal changes towards diverse

cultures after their first global travel experience, using Krathwohl’s hierarchy of receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing as the initial analytical framework. To highlight examples of responses from participants indicative of movement through the levels, Table 6 below was created. Further, to visualize the affective hierarchy identified throughout the data, a visual was created to help guide an understanding of how movement through each category was identified: the action of engagement within the level, the focus within the level, and the major verbs associated with the level. This visual is available for reference as Appendix F.

Table 6.

Responses Demonstrating Cultural Growth within the Affective Hierarchy

Affective Taxonomy	Example of Affective Growth in Terms of Cultural Competency
Receiving	<p>“I remember recognizing the differences in the buildings because most of them are older than what I’m used to seeing or how, like the landscapes were done differently so just like the visual differences from what I’m like used to seeing.”</p> <p>(Joan, Interview #2)</p>
Responding	<p>“The very first time we were going to get on the subway, Saul talked about if you do get separated always go to embankment because that’s the main spot...and I tried to grasp my bearings...trying to memorize the layout just in case I were to have gotten lost.” (Joan, Interview #2)</p>

- Valuing “I realized how uneducated I was...if you were to take me and drop me off in China like, I could not figure my way out. And so...maybe I should take the initiative on my own to learn about other countries and their languages and their culture.” (Marie, Interview #2)
- “It’s just really cool that they (Chinese) take so much pride in their health.” (Florence, Interview #2)
- “I was a little but envious...they just seemed so relaxed and actually got to enjoy their time (at the restaurants).” (Joan, Interview #2)
- Organization “If I wasn’t on any of those trips, I probably wouldn’t have the same like mindsets or thoughts that I do now about certain things.” (Joan, Interview #3)
- “America itself is so small compared to...the world. I mean...it's such a tiny spot or tiny part of the world but it’s felt so big to me before having gone to China.” (Marie, Interview #3)
- “When you grow up in America, you feel like the whole world revolves around America and then when you go to other countries you realize that’s not a big thing at all.” (Amelia, Interview #3)

Level 1: Being Receptive to Differences – “Nothing Like the United States”

Within the affective domain, Receiving refers to an individual's ability to pay attention to or be aware of the new environment they are immersed in. As discussed in RQ1 findings, all six participants had limited access to cultural diversity prior to their global travel experience. They also acknowledged they were culturally confined but were willing to learn more about other cultures, evidenced by the fact they all chose to participate in a global travel experience. Each participant went from a rural, small town Southern setting to another country's city center, such as Paris, Milan, and Shanghai. The geographical relocation due to global travel forced participants to be more receptive about differences between their home culture and the host cultures they engaged with during the travel experience.

From the analysis of data, it was determined each participant was receptive about elements of their observations and experiences in the new culture that was different from their own cultural practices and norms. Some were positive. For example, Amelia mentioned Greece was “kind of dirty, but ... still cool.” Sojourner recalled seeing a castle that looked like it was from a “fairytale” and complimented how people in European restaurants were “relaxed” and “showed a lot of patience.” However, some of the cultural practices and norms were perceived negatively. For example, Elizabeth described the hotels in Europe as mostly “very tacky ... nothing matched like it does in America.” Joan reflected that the night trains in Europe were “very sketchy.” Florence commented she felt “privileged” to be an American after finding out cold and icy drinks are not served in Chinese restaurants. She noted China is “nothing like the United States

... completely different with the way we (Americans) do things and how a city looks and transportation.”

Level 2: Responding with Curiosity – “Why”

For the purpose of this analysis, Responding was operationalized as travelers more proactively engaging in the exploration of new cultures through demonstrating increased curiosity and open-mindedness when interacting with others and trying something new. The travelers exhibited a certain level of curiosity towards other cultures before the travel. However, they admitted the travel experience had changed them to become more proactively curious about others. For example, Elizabeth mentioned after her travel experience, she would “go out and try and talk to those people [from the countries she traveled] because I was like well, I mean I’ve been to where they live.” Elizabeth also said she was “more curious” about diverse people groups and “how they live their lives.” Florence also confirmed her growth in curiosity and commented, “when I see a foreign family here ... I always just kind of think about like oh, how did they get here ... what do they want to look for...is it the same things I look for in a different country.” Marie shared a similar sentiment saying she is “more inquisitive about their culture.”

In addition, every traveler agreed they became more open-minded, or capable of seeing others without cultural assumptions, as a result of the experience. Joan commented she used to see people from other cultures only as “categorized into that group,” but after the experience was able to see them as “individuals with their own lives” trying to be happy and safe. Elizabeth also “learned to not judge a book by its cover” and to not “go off assumptions if you haven’t actually experienced it.” Marie

added being open-minded could be as simple as trying “authentic Chinese food” when you “don’t know” what is in it. Amelia claimed she also “learned how to listen better and...the stereotype just kind of went away and it...made me realize everyone is more similar than they are different.” Florence confirmed a new way of responding to diversity saying “appreciating that you two are different but not trying to judge”

Nevertheless, comments from participants suggested despite such self-reported changes in their cultural perceptions, they still used their home country (US) cultural norms to describe and assess different situations they faced during the global travel experience. Individual travelers seemed to differ in their tendencies to turn an experience of cultural shock into learning about other cultures. For instance, both Florence and Marie experienced the cultural difference regarding icy drinks in China. While Marie acknowledged that “they (Chinese) didn’t believe in drinking the ice water, [because] it was bad for you,” Florence expressed the experience led to renewed appreciation of her own culture, as evidenced by her comment, “when we think of cold here [in the United States] ... we are thinking so cold your drink has sweat pouring off ... how good we have it in America.”

Positive interactions with people from another culture appeared to encourage travelers to be more responsive or left them wanting to know more about the people and places they were engaging with. This is exemplified in Marie’s interaction with a young boy she described as “really sweet” on the Great Wall of China where “he just made my heart melt” and she wondered how his dad “provided for them.” Sojourner said she “kept having...positive interactions” and realized there was “nothing to be scared of” and subsequently lost fears about exploring more during the experience.

Negative perceptions or experiences also seemed to foster investigative growth for participants regarding cultural competency. For example, Marie was initially concerned about hotels in China, after hearing from her tour director that “there’s only certain hotels that Americans can stay in.” She recalled that she “freaked out” and wondered, “is there something that the country itself is hiding, like why?” Another instance was when Sojourner described an interaction with a man “asking us for money” by “haggling us” and she described him as “not very nice” and “aggressive.” Even though this was a negative experience, Sojourner said she was “appreciative that that happened” when it did, because she learned how to handle that type of situation in the future.

Level 3: Valuing Diversity – “Everybody Functions in Their Own Way”

The next level of development analyzed for this study was Valuing. Valuing is the judgement about the worth or importance of a person, concept, or thing. This perceived change was determined if the participant showed involvement and commitment to the location, people, and culture they were exposed to. Further, each learner also indicated they felt an attitude shift towards other people groups as a result of their experience. Therefore, valuing was evident if a participant was able to demonstrate perceived changes in attitude or appreciation for the external.

Travelers indicated they were willing to accept differences among people groups as a result of their global travel experience. Elizabeth indicated her newfound appreciation for others when she said, “it’s ok to be different...everybody’s not going to be like you are” and how she “really want(s) to know what they truly are instead of just generalizing.” Elizabeth said she viewed others more in “a positive way than what it

used to be.” Marie found herself appreciating diversity claiming, “when you’re put...into a whole different country with different values and beliefs and ways of life...you gain an appreciation and consider...why other people do things the way they do versus why you do what you do.” Joan added, “now that I’ve been able to... meet people from different cultures it’s easier for me to be a lot more accepting of those differences rather than just write them off as strange or weird.” Florence also indicated growth as she stated she wanted to “learn as much as possible and if that meant I had to wake up every morning and do Tai Chi, I would have.” Amelia said the experience bridged “the gap between how your differences make you really similar in...being human.” These responses all indicated participants were engaged with their location and accepting differences present within the new locations.

Every single participant confirmed both feeling out of control and dependent on others, which ultimately lead to growth. When describing how out of control she felt, Elizabeth said, “about ninety-nine percent of the time, I’m not going to lie.” Florence said, “almost a hundred percent” and “I wouldn’t even be able to communicate with anybody...absolutely nothing.” Marie agreed with the others saying it left her feeling “frustrated” but she also said she gained appreciation for language. She indicated “if I could go back, I would have definitely done some homework as far as the language barrier...even like the simple things like the bathroom or yes and no type of things.” Sojourner said she was “eighty percent dependent” on the me as the comfortable point of contact, the Tour Director, and other students on the tour. Each participant indicated their initial emotions towards the language barrier was one of frustration or anxiety.

However, each participant also indicated as the tour progressed, so did their level of confidence in engaging diverse people groups and their appreciation of languages. Even *on tour*, Florence said her appreciation and desire to know more Chinese increased. Florence said she kept “pulling her [tour guide] aside and asking, ‘how do I say this’ or I want to give them this money, ‘how do I say thank you’ or you know something like that?” She said she really learned to “appreciate the language” and wanted to “feel included in their culture.” Additionally, Marie, Sojourner, and Joan all said they wished they could speak more languages to better interact with others.

Although travelers were able to indicate increased appreciation for the value of cultural diversity, there were times participants admitted they still sometimes struggled with consistently enacting this attitude. An example is Sojourner’s comment, “I do still find myself generalizing people but then...right after I comment something [wrong]...I do find myself going...directly after saying wait, wait, wait, that’s not right.” It is important to note Sojourner’s admission indicated she was still engaged in valuing, as she showed a commitment to making sure she appreciated each individual independent of stereotypes, even if her initial reaction was negative.

Level 4: Organizing the Old and the New – “America Itself Is So Small”

The concept of organization was the next level of affective development and focused on organizing one’s values into priorities. Organization is the ability to relate the given value to already held values and create internal harmony within the philosophy of the individual. Mostly, this category included new ways in which participants thought about America, their home country. This organization was done by the participant contrasting different values, resolving conflicts within the diverse values, and then

creating a new value system. Therefore, organization really was exploring whether a participant combined and conceptualized a new value by giving it priority in their cultural framework. In this particular experience, organization among participants was clear throughout the data in how each participant integrated a newfound appreciation of other people and cultures into their existing schema of how they perceived and appreciated America.

Evidence emerged throughout the data that each participant rejected prior constructs and found value in diversity. The major question then became, could they integrate this value of a new culture into their already existing belief system regarding their own culture? To evaluate whether or not participants were able to re-organize their cultural framework, the demonstration of the following behaviors were analyzed: alter, arrange, combine, compare, defend, explain, order, integrate, or organize.

Participant responses indicated they were able to alter and explain the way they thought about diverse cultures as a result of this experience. Sojourner said she wanted to “see how every country kind of operates and how they navigate this huge universe.” Joan described this change by stating, “I just up until that point [before global travel] kind of assumed we all lived the same even though in my mind...I knew we didn’t.” Florence claimed she “would rather go and enhance my knowledge, experience different things” and allow those experiences to “shape you into the person you are because you learn different things that you are appreciative of.” Another example was Amelia when she claimed she “became less afraid and anxious about being outside of my own bubble” as she came into contact with more diversity.

As a result of the travel experience, participants' responses surrounding a perceived increase in empathy and patience towards engaging with diversity were consistent within the data. An example of this was Marie suggesting travel made her "look at myself" when she discussed patience for other cultural groups. Marie further explained, "if they're willing to have patience with me, shouldn't I be willing to do the same for them?" Marie claimed her travel experience gave her insight in how to be more culturally empathic in her career saying, "with my profession being nursing, I think compassion and empathy really play a big role and when I have moments like I did in China...it gives me drive to...do what I do." Amelia had similar responses saying she was "more understanding" if she saw "something...I didn't understand" and was "able to compartmentalize it as...I don't live here so I don't have any way to judge that." Amelia claimed her mindset changed because "it [an identified difference] might be a norm that I'm not aware of." She continued, "I remember from that point on thinking...even at home, when I see something that I don't understand, not judging it." Amelia reflected on having empathy when encountering someone "not from America" and understanding "how confused they might be in a...certain situations or if they're scared." Florence also said she tries to "be more patient because...I just can't snap my fingers and know everything." Florence indicated mindset growth when she said, "be patient...willing to learn...taking it day by day."

As the global travel experience offered a catalyst for change, the participants found themselves challenged by whether they were going to change the way they viewed America in their cultural framework. Some were able to use the experience to view other countries more equally, as seen in Amelia's comment that she felt "more indifferent

about...shared values because after the trip...it was more...human values.” Continuing, Amelia said she felt after the trip she viewed the world as more “human” and less focused on “American or European” as “it definitely changed the way I saw how...the world interacts with each other.” Joan also had a perspective shift with the way she viewed herself as an American claiming her pride in America “hasn’t diminished or grown...but the way I look at things have changed.”

Further, responses among participants indicated they readjusted how they viewed their home country of the United States as they were directly exposed to cultural diversity. Participants began to understand America exists as part of a bigger global community and further, they explained some changes in their understanding of being an American. Some participants lessened their attachment to America being the greatest. An example of this was Sojourner saying, “travel has taught me...there’s no one way to live” and “one thing about America is we kind of feel like our way is the best way.” Sojourner said traveling led to her understanding that she was “just a small piece to the puzzle” and she was “there to observe and not to change things.” She continued, saying she started “to feel like...we don’t treat every culture respectfully or the same.” She confirmed her reorganization of America in her new cultural framework by saying, “people can operate just fine...we [America] don’t always have to go and take over.” Another element Sojourner noticed was “Americans have a long way to go in terms of learning different languages” claiming when in America she never sees “signs with different languages....but when...overseas...saw signs that had three different languages to accommodate a lot of different people.” Joan said the way Americans “view ourselves is...elite” and when she traveled to Europe was able to “see how other people felt about

Americans.” Joan said she finally realized “people don’t think the same as me because they didn’t grow up here.” Marie had a similar revelation saying she “backed down off of...Americans are so great and it’s the greatest country ever.” Perhaps the clearest statement to summarize this new organization of America was Marie’s comment: “America itself is so small compared to...the world. I mean...it’s such a tiny spot or tiny part of the world but it...felt so big to me before having gone to China.” Elizabeth said she “used to think that America was top tier...best weapons...best military” but once she went to Europe realized other countries “are doing just as good as we are.” Elizabeth continued by saying “as Americans, maybe we do too much.” Elizabeth integrated into her belief system the understanding that “everybody functions...in their own way but it’s not necessarily a bad way because it’s different than what we do here.” Florence also seemed to change her understanding of America in the world stating, “I’m literally just the amount of a grain of sand, there is so much out there. I can’t even wrap my head around it.” Amelia held a similar sentiment when she said, “it made the world feel...smaller in a way.”

While participants seemed to understand more about America in relation to the global community, there were times when participants still organized culture based on the prioritization of American ideals. Usually this occurred in the data when a participant was discussing an element considered a norm in America. An example was Florence describing her appreciation of American life with “savoring the food and cold drinks” and turning her “thermometer to sixty because it was so hot” when she returned back home to the US. Florence was able to respond to her new environment and learned different places “didn’t have the things” she “had here in America” and she didn’t realize

those things “were so important” to her everyday life, which created a learning moment for her. She further commented, “because of the things that I have...I came home and thought about...how...grateful I was.” Although Florence was recognizing differences and responding to them, she was unable to value certain differences and then integrate them into her existing framework, based on her cultural norms. Another example was Amelia discussing the meat they put into lasagna in Greece, claiming it “was not right.” These responses indicate food may not have been an area participants were willing to value differences as easily as some other cultural elements.

Level 5: Characterizing the New-Self – “Know That I’ll Be an Ally”

Characterization was the last level of affective development and participants were required to act consistently with the new value they attained. Within this particular study, the participant needed to take the value of appreciation for new cultures, prioritize the new value within already existing cultural constructs, and then act in a way that demonstrated their new changed perspective. Therefore, participants had to indicate adjustments within their patterns of behavior. The purpose of this study sought to find whether a short global experience could be the catalyst for affective change toward different cultures.

Evidence of characterization within a participant included behavior consistent with organizing the value of appreciating new cultures. Joan, arguably the most changed out of the six participants, demonstrated external actions that reflected internal changes as a result of the trip. Joan said if given any superpower, she would choose to “speak any language” so she can “have real conversations...and be able to connect.” Another example was Sojourner, who said she found herself wanting to engage with more

diversity by “trying to sit next to someone else” when picking a place to sit down. Sojourner said she doesn’t “avoid them [diverse groups]” and she is “very open to having more diverse views” in her group. Further, instead of just trying to “figure out how many other black people” are in a setting, she is more “aware of...other cultures” and making sure she is “befriending other people.” Behaviorally, Sojourner has intentionally become more inclusive by taking “more precaution in making sure people that look different are included or comfortable, at least around me and they know that I’ll be an ally.”

Evidence of characterization for some participants was through their chosen profession. An example was Joan, who works at a law firm specializing in immigration, actively pursuing legal means for citizenship among her clients. Joan said she “probably wouldn’t have the same...mindsets or thoughts that I do now about certain things,” including her job. Joan changed her mindset towards immigrants saying she used to be “very narrow-minded” and now feels she “can see...from their perspective” understanding she has “never had to live through what they’ve had to live through.” Both Florence and Marie presently are nurses and both attributed their travel experience to helping them grow within their professional field. Florence specifically said serving patients through the lens of cultural sensitivity was important because you “see all kind of different types of people” and when you “interact with somebody who is different” you cannot be “judgmental or mean to them.” Marie also discussed how her attitude shift has impacted her profession commenting “learning some of their [Chinese]...traditions...will help me...because many other cultures...are very nutrition focused, health focused and that plays a huge role...when you’re providing healthcare.” Marie said applying “things that I learned over there” to her profession of “providing care is huge” for her to do her

job well. Florence and Marie both shared an experience where they were able to see first-hand certain cultural traditions surrounding health and that experience not only shifted their perspective, but also changed their behaviors towards how they deal with diversity in their profession.

Multiple examples emerged throughout the data supporting increased confidence among participants, including engaging in additional travel opportunities, conversing with diverse groups of people, and overcoming personal limitations. Joan said, “if I hadn’t gone on this trip, I wouldn’t feel comfortable [traveling alone]...but because of this experience...I feel a lot more comfortable doing that.” Joan has since traveled to various areas around the globe and within the USA and claims without this first trip she “would have been too scared to” go anywhere else. Sojourner also indicated increased confidence as a result of the trip, saying she “was not...afraid to...ask people what they believe or...sparking those types [sensitive] of conversations.” Another traveler who shared this sentiment was Elizabeth. When seeing someone from another culture, she said she will “just start asking questions” so the next time she engages with someone from that culture she has “more...informed knowledge of their lives and...how they conduct things.” Sojourner also had a major increase in the confidence to do things that she perceived to hold her back in the future from enjoying travel experiences. She declared travel had “become her brand” and fed into her “desire to see more and do more and push...limits.” For example, she acknowledged some of her “destinations have been limited because of my lack of ability to swim.” Therefore, her “desire to travel has pushed” her to “expand certain skill sets” like swimming, that she had been planning to work on, but now felt “forced to because of things I want to do.”

Just because participants were operating within their new mindset did not mean everyone else had a new mindset. Therefore, another element of change was how participants navigated difficult conversations or moments with family members, friends, or individuals who did not necessarily share their new cultural framework. For instance, Joan claimed she has “noticed a difference in how I approach people” and when she hears her family “saying things I don’t necessarily agree with anymore I try and have...educated conversations with them.” Before the travel experience, Joan said she “would avoid confrontation at all cost” but now is “more confident to...speak up...even if I know we are going to have different opinions.” Additionally, Joan said she understands now that “each culture might have different norms” and therefore she is more “aware of not only what I’m saying, but how I...present myself.” Amelia also felt she changed her interaction with others, claiming she tries to “approach people in conversations” with the mentality of assuming “nothing, I don’t know what religion they are, I don’t know where they are from, and I don’t know what they think about certain world events.” Sojourner held similar views “making sure” she is “more cautious” about what she is “gonna ask ...because sometimes comments or questions come off as very ignorant and rude” when speaking with others. Therefore, participant responses indicate an approach of not making assumptions, not pre-judging, and in turn, really listening to the speaker.

Summarizing Research Question Three

In order to answer research question three, “*How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain toward different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence?*” an analysis was done on the data and

chunked into themes. Those themes were so closely connected to the affective development hierarchy, the hierarchy levels were used for the themes to prescribe clarity to the discussion. Evidence through participant responses indicated participants were able to move through all five levels of affective development, with some participants showing more evidence than others.

Joan, Amelia, Marie, and Sojourner all moved through all five levels of affective development in regard to different cultures. Some participants showed more consistent evidence they moved to characterization and were able to operate within that affective level. Joan appeared to have the most change of all the participants. As mentioned prior, Joan did not have a support system that encouraged diversity and in fact, discouraged it. Joan had little exposure and opportunity for exposure to diversity growing up and this trip was the opening she needed to move into her new mindset and construct her own opinions and worldview, which she did.

Amelia and Sojourner were the two participants who had the most exposure and support to engage with diversity growing up, therefore the transition to extend that mentality to other cultural groups appeared to be a smooth transition for both participants. Both Amelia and Sojourner consistently provided evidence to support their movement through all five levels of development.

Marie and Florence did not have a lot of exposure to diversity growing up but did not feel discouraged from engaging with diversity by their support systems. Marie and Florence both moved through all five stages of the affective domain in regard to cultural competency. However, Florence was very weak in the area of characterization, as she only had evidence to support action towards appreciation of diversity within the realm of

her workplace. This is no doubt important, but there was no evidence to support there was characterization occurring in other areas of Florence's life. However, Marie gave strong, concrete evidence to support her development through the five levels.

Lastly, Elizabeth had exposure to diversity growing up and also seemed to have a support system that was accepting of diversity. However, Elizabeth carried the least amount of depth to her affective levels. While she appeared to move through the levels, responses surrounding characterization had little evidence. What is interesting to note about Elizabeth is she works a Black police officer—against her families will—and with a predominately White work force. Elizabeth has several life factors that would make one assume she was more culturally competent than what the interviews revealed.

As a result of this trip, participants were able to engage firsthand with the people and cultures, therefore affording an opportunity to construct their own opinions of the new environment based on direct contact. Although some participants appeared to exhibit stronger attitudinal shifts than others post trip, all participants did indicate increased levels of cultural competency, seeming to treat diverse peoples more individually and not grouping or stereotyping.

Summary

In Chapter Four I discussed the results from the study using responses from the participants and answered the research questions proposed. From analyzing the data, I found that a global travel experience taken during adolescence can have a major impact on the cultural competency of an individual. I discovered how much cultural exposure participants had prior to their first global travel experience, what factors were major

elements of an individual's growth development while *on tour*, and how each individual perceived the experience impacted their attitudes towards diversity. All participants started with a low cultural competency prior to the global travel experience and all participants experienced significant growth in cultural competency as a result of the trip. In the next and last Chapter I will discuss the key findings, limitations to my research, and the implications of this study both in practical settings and for future research.

Chapter V. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to understand whether a transformative learning experience, represented by global travel, could be the catalyst for rural adolescents to perceive increased cultural competency through affective development. Research questions were developed to investigate each participant's perceived cultural competency prior to and after their first global travel experience including the *on tour* factors common among participants leading to perceived increased cultural competency through affective development. Understanding how an individual perceived changes within their cultural competency from a global travel experience could assist educators in understanding, creating, and advocating for experiences that are currently very limited (Kenna & Russell, 2016).

Higher educational institutions and the workplace are finding both students and employees lack many interpersonal skills, including cultural competency (Dean & East, 2019; Patascil & Tablatin, 2017). Each of the participants in this study transitioned directly from high school to college, and many are already in the workforce. Therefore, understanding how rural adolescents perceived adjustments to their cultural competency as a result of a global travel experience could be valuable for educators and employers.

Given the lack of discussion and empirical evidence of how a global travel experience affects adolescents from lower SES and rural communities (Johnson, Kuhfeld, & Soland, 2021), I examined six females (two Black and four White) who engaged in

global travel during their adolescent years in Title I schools in two different school districts to understand how global travel transformed their cultural competencies. Using a basic interpretive design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), a series of three individual interviews (90-120 minutes) and responses to five online discussion prompts over five weeks were analyzed, and themes emerged through iterative cycles of analysis. Furthermore, participants' perceived transformations in their cultural perceptions were mapped using Krathwohl's model of affective development (1964) to gauge the extent of perceived changes. Through analyzing the data, I was able to explore and understand participants' cultural perceptions prior to travel, aspects of travel they perceived impacted their cultural perceptions, and perceived cultural changes due to travel. Qualitative data was collected with the intent to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions

RQ1. What cultural perceptions did rural adolescents have prior to their first global travel experience?

RQ2. What aspects of the global travel experience contributed to shaping rural adolescents' cultural experience?

RQ3: How do travel abroad participants perceive to have changed within their affective domain towards different cultures as a result of global travel during adolescence?

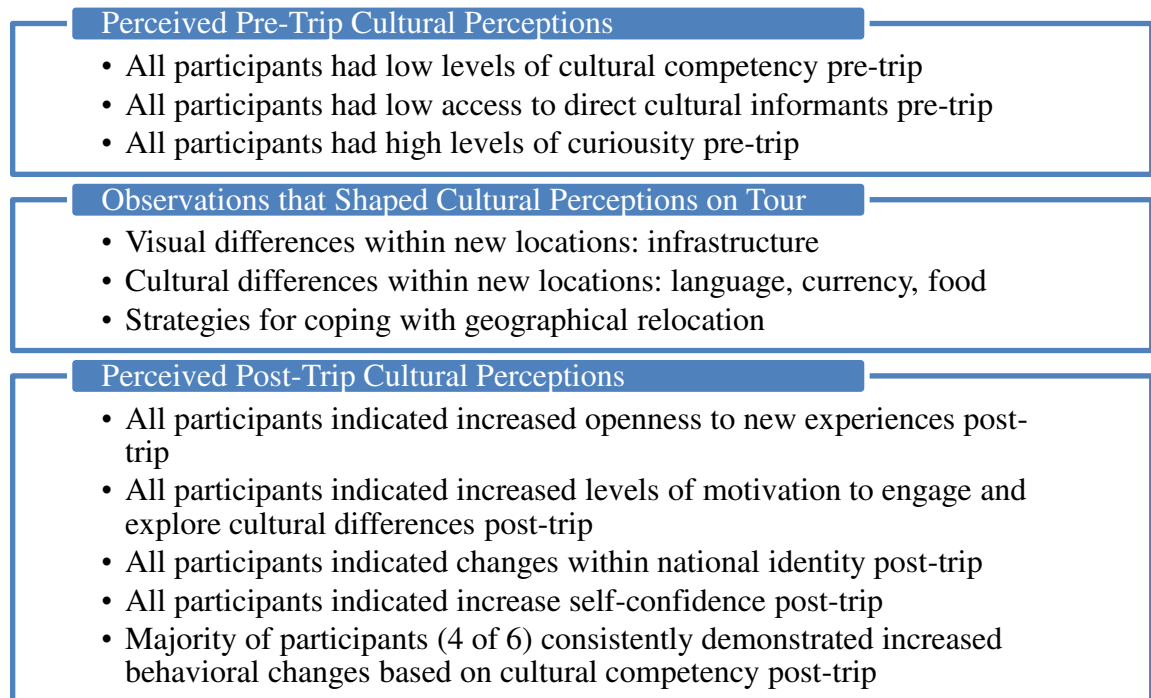
Discussion of the Key Findings

Ultimately, I found that an adolescent embarking on a global travel experience can expect an attitudinal mindset shift to reflect increased cultural competency. I found this mindset shift should include the ability to reject stereotypes, recognize cultural nuances, and value diversity. Further, I discovered a reorganizing of one's national self-

identity and implementation of more inclusive behaviors will also be demonstrated. Through my study, I confirmed a rural adolescent can move through all five levels of cultural affective development as a result of a global travel experience taken in the span of less than two weeks. Additionally, this movement can occur in individuals who start with little to no direct access to cultural informants throughout their childhood. I was also able to identify what perceived elements or interactions were important to engage with *on tour* for this transformation to occur. In order to better understand the process of perceived cultural affective development due to a global travel experience, I will detail the major findings revealed through the data analysis. I created a concept map (Figure 4) to assist in visualizing the breakdown of key findings per research question.

Figure 4.

Key Findings Aligned with Research Questions



Pre-Trip Cultural Perceptions: Connection to Literature

The findings from Research Question One provided insight into characteristics of adolescents in rural communities who might engage in global travel programs. Further, an understanding of pre-trip cultural competency was developed based on responses given through the data collection process. To summarize, all six participants perceived they had low levels of cultural competency pre-trip, low access to cultural informants pre-trip, and cultural perceptions were based on what was taught through school and media. However, all six participants also self-reported high levels of natural curiosity pre-trip.

Pre-Trip Cultural Competency. Abundant within the literature was an identified lack of cultural competency among students graduating high school and moving into either the workforce or higher education (Deardorff, 2004, 2006; Meeks, 2017; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010). Consistent with the literature (Deardorff, 2004, 2006; Meeks, 2017; Mitchell, Skinner, & White, 2010), all six participants in my study had very low levels of perceived cultural competency prior to participating in their first global travel experience. When participants reflected on their childhood, responses reflected significant attitudinal alignment with perpetuated stereotypes, extreme national identity attachment to being American, and generalized beliefs based on indirect cultural contacts. The participant responses affirmed low levels of perceived cultural competency prior to their global experience.

More and more post-secondary institutions are reporting students entering into higher education or the workplace are unable to navigate diverse cultural landscapes, a problem considered crucial to post-graduate success (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniak, 2016).

Cultural competency is primarily developed within the affective domain, and therefore it is unsurprising many post-graduates lack cultural competency because affective development is difficult to both teach and measure (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; NSAA, 2016; Pierre & Oughton, 2007; Robles, 2012). Further, although cultural competency skills are in high demand in today's job market, the skills have been difficult to develop because educational institutions struggle with successfully teaching affective development (Dean & East, 2019; Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Pierre & Oughton, 2007). Based on participant responses, I affirmed lack of pre-trip cultural competency among my adolescent participants because all six participants' perceived pre-trip cultural competency was at the first level of affective development: receiving, which was simply recognizing differences exist.

Pre-Trip Cultural Informants. All participants had relatively consistent, generalized, and stereotypical views of the country or countries prior to travel based on people's "appearance," their exposure to mass media, schooling, and the limited access to cultural informants in their personal lives. Joan said her pre-trip exposure to diversity was "100% lacking," and this lack of diversity was a sentiment all six participants shared. Typically, parents, teachers, caregivers, and friends acted as cultural informants serving to enhance certain cultural pre-conceived notions. For example, stereotypical responses from my participants included the belief European White people were the same as American White people and the belief Kung Fu was the only type of martial art within China. Further, participants' discussion of historical moments, like the Holocaust, in school seemed to shape both positive and negative perceptions of particular locations and appeared to solidify generalizations based on singular moments in history (Katz & Braly,

1935). Although cultural informants were minimal in all participants, Joan and Sojourner did both reflect on their Spanish teachers in school and how they perceived their teachers appreciated diversity in a way others did not.

Curiosity for Global Travel. Despite the aforementioned findings affirming participants had both limited pre-trip cultural exposure and low, overly simplified cultural competency, all six participants also perceived themselves to be naturally curious about the world and approached the global experience with excitement and interest in new locations. Most of the travelers (five of the six) said this was their first opportunity to travel outside of the United States. Although very limited empirical research exists regarding adolescent global travel, the UNWTO issued a report profiling young tourists' attitudes toward travel, which are consistent with this study, highlighting curiosity and discovery of new cultures and landscapes highest on reasons why participants engaged in travel in the first place (WTO, 2016). Of the six travelers, three described themselves pre-travel as curious, one as inquisitive, one as adventurous, and one as extroverted. Therefore, all six participants indicated high levels of intrinsic curiosity prior to their global experience, which appeared to lead to them making the choice to abandon their comfort boundaries and engage in a potentially transformative experience (Kohlbury, 2016; Markman, 2013).

Observations Shaping Cultural Perceptions on Tour Connection to Literature

Using the findings from Research Question 2, I identified five core components of the travel experience that could contribute to one's cultural development. The participants' global travel experience highlighted four dimensions within their new locations including infrastructure, language, monetary interactions, and meals, all which

afforded participants the ability to notice and engage with differences among cultures. The fifth component shaping cultural development was the reliance on travel leaders and fellow travelers to make sense of the perceived differences suggesting strategies emerge to deal with misunderstandings, questions, anxiety, or nervousness that can occur. Except for comments about elements of infrastructure including architectural style and landscape, where travelers maintained an observer status, comments about different aspects of their travel experiences were all based on direct interactions with the setting. Mezirow (1997) defined transformative learning theory as the process of creating change in one's frame of reference by being willing to explore uncomfortable situations. Identifying each participant as naturally curious prior to their experience was important for understanding their willingness to immerse in a potentially uncomfortable situation.

Visual Differences. Observations that made an impression on the participants were identified visual differences. All six of the participants recognized differences within their new environment and these differences led to increased curiosity about “why” people do things differently. These “why” questions led to more cultural understanding. The visual differences most discussed by participants including architecture, railway systems, roads, housing, hotels, toilet facilities, and even walkways. Participants were able to immediately recognize visual differences and began to generate a new cultural framework based on their new understanding of why other cultures do things differently than America. New cultural framework development as a result of travel was supported by Houser et al.'s (2011) study that found participants increased their engagement with their new environment because they were better able to understand the context of the environment.

Cultural Differences. Another major travel element all participants were very responsive to were cultural differences. Mezirow (1997, 2003) said an individual's ability to self-reflect was essential to understanding one's own cultural framework including beliefs, feelings, and values. All six participants noted cultural differences primarily in regard to language, currency, and food. Each of these cultural differences typically resulted in the participants having to interact with an individual from the new environment. Therefore, as a result, certain cultural preconceptions about others—or self— were affirmed, denied, or expanded. Mezirow (1991) said putting oneself in an uncomfortable situation, learning within the situation, and then self-reflecting on the situation can lead to a holistic comprehension of the world and of oneself. In my study this change within one's preconceived beliefs can be seen in Sojourner who began her journey with a belief all Europeans were White people like the White people she was exposed to within the US, and she believed she would not see Black people in European countries. Sojourner found a new understanding of diversity within both Black and White populations and began to reflect specifically on the Black residents she discovered existed within European countries. This experience was one example of how Sojourner's understanding of culture expanded, both within herself and her understanding of others.

Strategies for Coping with Geographic Relocation. Another major finding from my research was participants learned how to manage uncomfortable situations. I already established that participants were naturally curious pre-trip, which most likely led to their participation on the trip. However, just because they were naturally curious does not mean they were equipped in adolescence to navigate an entirely different cultural setting, especially when their perceived cultural competency was so low. There is no

discussion of coping strategies while *on tour* in any of the other research. I believe this is a significant finding because discomfort—whether physical or mental—is a precursor to transformation described by Mezirow’s (1997) theory.

Strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety while *on tour* included trusting the leader and staying close to travel partners. All participants indicated they had to learn coping mechanisms while *on tour*. Mezirow (1997, 2003) stated in order to have personal transformation an individual had to move through four stages of learning, as discussed in Chapter Two. Mezirow (1997, 2003) also explained most individuals are unable to reach the last level of learning because people are not typically comfortable challenging one’s natural bias. The geographical relocation that happens naturally as a result of global travel immediately put participants in an environment where challenges to pre-existing constructs occurred, as seen by participant’s responsiveness with visual and cultural differences. Figuring out how to manage emotions was imperative for their willingness to continually engage with their location enough to appreciate and value it.

Post-Trip Cultural Competency Connection to Literature

With the findings from Research Question 3, I was able to understand different ways in which cultural development of adolescent travelers from rural communities could manifest using Krathwohl’s (1964) affective development model. All six participants were receptive—even conducive—to cultural change prior to travel. This receptiveness remained constant and increased as the travel experience yielded exposure to more diverse environments and interactions, as noted in the findings for Research Question 2. Participants became more responsive to exploring cultural diversity as their curiosity and open-mindedness increased with each new situation and as they learned to adjust within

new settings. Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, and McMillen (2009) determined college students who participated in global travel perceived increases within their attitudes or beliefs enabling one to work with, respond to, and support people in different cultural settings. My study investigated whether adolescents could perceive an increase within their cultural competency in similar manners found among college students. The responses from my participants revealed a global travel experience taken during adolescence did significantly transform their attitudes and beliefs surrounding cultural diversity including demonstration of behavioral changes based on internal transformation. Therefore, a perceived increase in cultural competency was present among all six participants.

Using Krathwohl's model of Affective Development (1964), I was able to evaluate post-trip cultural competency as each participant consistently demonstrated movement through each level. Through analyzing movement through the levels: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing, some key findings emerged.

Receive & Respond - Openness to New Experiences and Engaging & Exploring Cultural Differences. Based on analysis of the data, participants were able to easily demonstrate movement through the first two levels of affective development: receiving and responding. The key findings detailed above for research question two highlight the elements of global travel participants were most receptive and responsive to. Additionally, all six participants emerged from their global travel experience with an increased desire to engage with new experiences, particularly experiences dealing with cultural elements. This increased willingness to engage with diversity is supported by

Zimmerman and Neyer's (2013) findings that global travel increased extraversion and openness to experiences among college study abroad students. Further, Nunan (2006) found increased interest in other cultures as a result of their study among college age students. My study affirms adolescents who participate in a global experience can also develop an increased desire to engage with new cultures. Further, my study also supports that participants can alter their mindset about cultural diversity in a shorter time frame than is typically afforded by the study abroad program (Kohlbray, 2016; Le et al., 2013). As mentioned earlier, although all six participants had low cultural competency prior to their experience, they all held high levels of curiosity pre-trip. Therefore, participants demonstrated transitioning to new environments with a renewed and deepened desire to explore more opportunities and engage with new learning experiences surrounding cultural diversity.

Valuing & Organizing - A More Sophisticated View of the World. Among participants, valuing diversity led to the reorganization of how they viewed America in relation to the world. In order for participants to adjust their national self-identity, they first had to transform their priorities about America and other cultures. This reorganization could only happen after they first gained an appreciation for and valued the diversity they interacted with.

Valuing a new environment and appreciating the cultural differences present signified a big growth step for the participants because it represented movement from level one to level three of Krathwohl's hierarchy (1964). Mezirow (1997, 2003) posited in order for an individual to undergo a transformation they had to be critically aware of their generalized bias. As a result of this experience, each participant had to potentially

reject their preconceived beliefs based on media, movies, and even their educational institutions projection of different peoples and cultures to develop their own unique appreciation and understanding of the new environment (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Shah, 2019). Abundant responses surrounding participants' appreciation of diverse cultures was present in the data. Additionally, participants were able to use their experience to shed several of the pre-trip preconceived beliefs surrounding different cultures to adopt a new mindset based on their observations and interactions while abroad. Examples can be seen in the Chapter Four discussion of the data. For instance, interactive moments like the one Marie had with a little boy on the Great Wall of China or Florence learning how to write calligraphy from a Chinese teacher led to changes in their cultural framework and resulted in new attitudes and beliefs about the Chinese people. Another example was when Sojourner navigated the language barrier by simply smiling because smiles "are universal." Each of these personal interactions appeared to shift a participant's mindset towards valuing diversity and created learning experiences to understand and discover more about another culture. These findings are supported by the literature because participants who deepen their appreciation for diversity will actively seek information guiding a deeper understanding of cultural differences, increase tolerance, and push comfort boundaries (Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016; Markman, 2013; Stebleton et al., 2013; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014).

All six of the participants were able to demonstrate movement through valuing a new culture, appreciating the new culture, integrating the new value into their cultural framework, and then reprioritizing America as a result of the trip. Prior to the experience, Marie said she believed America was "the greatest country ever" and after

realized “America...is so small compared to...the world.” They all gave similar responses as Marie demonstrating reorganization of America based on their experience. Williams (2005) found travel participants increased their ethnorelativism at higher rates than non-travelers. While my study did not have a control group, all six of my participants did demonstrate changes within their respect and appreciation of other cultures. Ostermark (2011) surveyed two participants and had mixed results. One participant engaged from the experience with a deepened appreciation and organization of their own country while the other participant emerged with a negative attitude towards their home country. While results from my study indicate all participants were able to integrate a new cultural appreciation for diversity, some participants still struggled to make correct cultural observances within their new locations. Brown and Brown (2013) discovered in their study participants from countries that have “superiority” views have to work extra hard to battle the natural instinct to make incorrect cultural observances. In my study, this can be seen in Chapter Four through Florence’s discussion of food, water, and air conditioners and Amelia’s discussion of the food not being right because it was not cooked the same way in America.

Characterization – Behavioral Changes & Self-Confidence. After travel all participants exhibited evidence of newly organized beliefs about cultural diversity after travel that involved changed conceptions about America in relation to other cultures and increased empathy towards self or others. Some participants (four of the six) were able to take the new internal changes and consistently demonstrate external or behavioral changes. Joan works at an immigration law firm, something she said would “never” have happened prior to her trip. Florence and Marie both work in the nursing profession, a

field they described as requiring cultural awareness and competency. Varela & Gatlin-Watts (2014) found behavioral adaption was the most sophisticated facet to cultural competency. Behavioral adaption implied the participant was willing to create cultural contacts and understand gaps exist across cultures (Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). My study supports this contention because I was able to identify movement within each participant through the five levels of affective development, with the last stage being behavioral adaption (characterization). While not all participants were able to consistently demonstrate permanent movement into characterization, all participants did share they perceived an increase in empathy towards others through interpersonal interactions made available through the travel experience.

Further, all of the participants indicated changes within their self-confidence. For some, perceived increase in confidence was as simple as being willing to communicate with diverse people groups. For others it was willingness to engage in solo travel in the future. Increased self-confidence is considered to be a major indicator of a successful foreign travel experience (Alexander et al., 2010; Feldberg, 2016; Garbati & Rothschild, 2016; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004).

Participants varied on how much characterization was evident based on their reports on external behavioral patterns attached to their organization of a new value system. While some participants, Joan and Sojourner, indicated high levels of external behavioral changes, one participant, Elizabeth, did not indicate as much evidence of external behavioral change. Interestingly, Joan and Sojourner began at opposite ends of the starting point for cultural diversity, but both indicated the highest level of change towards diversity. Joan had really low evidence of cultural competency in her life,

heavily based off her lack of exposure to any type of direct or indirect diversity. In comparison, Sojourner arguably had the most exposure to diversity and also exhibited evidence of the most cultural competency prior to the global experience. Although each participant indicated some type of external behavior change based on internal changes, not all of them provided sufficient evidence to claim true characterization in their lives. Characterization needed to be a permanent, consistent behavioral change for the participant (Krathwohl et al., 1964). Despite not all participants exhibiting concrete behavioral adaption within level five of affective development, all participants did demonstrate perceived cultural affective growth within all other levels.

Implications for Practice

Several implications for practice were established from the findings of this study. Implications discussed in this section include increasing opportunities for rural adolescents to participate in global travel, identifying and recruiting effective travel leaders, training leaders for successful tours, post-travel debriefing sessions, reducing financial barriers associated with travel, developing virtual global relationships, and creating curiosity driven traditional lessons.

Increasing Global Travel Opportunities for Rural Adolescents

Increasing the opportunity to travel for adolescents is essential to cultural development. Five of the six participants said this was the first time they had an opportunity to travel outside of America. My results indicated adolescents can demonstrate perceived high levels of cultural affective development as a result of a global travel experience. Educational institutions, including school districts, should develop an understanding of the importance of having their students travel abroad and develop travel

programs within their middle and high schools. America's rural students are uniquely at risk for opportunity loss due to funding and resource allocation, are often denied exposure opportunities, and have a larger financial barrier for travel than their urban counterparts (Tieken & Montgomery, 2012). Therefore, more travel opportunities need to be made available among this type of learner. For instance, if there are three different school districts within a community, and only one school offers travel opportunities, then any student from the community should be able to participate. Many school districts have become more and more concerned with liability issues; therefore, many travel opportunities are diminished (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Wheeler, 2011). School superintendents need to be educated on not only how valuable educational travel is but also on the reality of liability concerns. In terms of global travel, most educational travel agencies absorb the total burden of liability to mitigate these types of concerns (EF Tours, 2023; Explorica, 2023; Worldstrides, 2023).

Identifying, Recruiting, and Retaining Travel Leaders

Teachers need to be identified as potential travel leaders and trained and compensated to maximize the travel experience among the adolescent participants (Bell & Anscombe, 2013; Trimble, 2015). Participants in my study revealed the already established teacher-student relationship was important for their parent in trusting to send them abroad and also helped them feel secure while traveling abroad. Therefore, because of the established relationship, the suggestion is teachers should be the first group recruited for leading a global travel experience. In order to assist with retention of good travel leaders, community groups should be built among the teachers who are willing and able to lead travel tours to help manage emotional burnout, liability issues, and feeling

unsupported by their administration, all elements identified as reasons teachers do not want to travel with students (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Cengelci, 2013; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Greene et al., 2014; Higgins, et al., 2012; Wheeler, 2011). Teachers should not be left to create, manage, and offer these types of opportunities with little to no support from their school or community.

Conducting a Successful Overseas Tour

To ensure successful development of travel programs within a community, teachers need to be trained in how to conduct a travel tour. Therefore, once teachers have been identified and trained to develop a travel program, teachers need training in how to conduct a tour that will result in adolescents demonstrating higher cultural competency. Conducting a successful tour can be done through ensuring the elements identified in this study are focal points of a travel experience. For example, making sure travelers personally interact with individuals from the new environment through communicating, engaging in monetary transactions, and navigating restaurant experiences. This type of experience could allow students to generate a variety of new skills (Houser et al., 2011 & Rohlf, 2015). Teachers need to be made aware of how important human interaction is for the traveler and help seek out those moments for their travelers. Further, teachers need to be able to acknowledge when they need to intervene in an interaction and when to allow the student to individually engage in an opportunity for growth.

An interesting finding from my study was understanding adolescents may need time to adjust and find coping strategies for their stress and feelings of anxiousness because of the new environment. Therefore, travel leaders need to understand dealing with unwanted emotions *on tour* is a process adolescents may need to go through and to

give them the freedom to manage their emotions, while still being available as a safety net for them (Roitblat, Cleminson, Kavin, Schonberger, & Shterenshis, 2020).

Acknowledging the different negative range of emotions that can occur *on tour*, how to help students navigate their emotions, and understanding when to intervene are important lessons that should be included in any teacher training program.

Post-Tour Debriefing Sessions

Hosting a debriefing session with the travel leader and participants shortly upon return from the experience is another implication for practice. Several of my participants suggested hosting some type of session after returning to discuss what they learned and explore cultural elements from the trip as a group. Debriefing sessions could act as a focus group to discover meaningful cultural observances, explore affective learning as a result of the tour, and quickly identify how travelers reflect on the experience (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009).

Developing Virtual Global Relationships

There is a need for increased assistance for financial resources if more adolescents are to have access to global travel experiences. If students and parents feel they are already excluded from travel opportunities based on finances, it could become a deterrent for future engagement with similar opportunities. As established earlier, rural adolescents have increased risk of opportunity and greater financial barriers (Teiken & Montgomery, 2021). When students in this study discussed barriers to travel, money was an issue. Therefore, to offset the cost of global travel, developing cultural competency within the traditional setting through an online pen pal program is suggested. In my study I found human interactions were monumental in shifting attitudes towards valuing

cultural differences. Therefore, an online pen pal program maximizes almost instant interactions for continued relationship development and creates opportunities for cultural observations and discussions (Smith, Lombardi, Asmi, Hinrichs, & Robertson, 2017).

Although immersion is determined to be the most effective way to develop cultural competency, finding alternative ways to increase cultural competency is of economic value (Akdere, Acheson, Jiang, 2021; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). Combining a virtual pen pal program using blog posts and facetime to recognize language differences could lead to the increased interest in understanding cultural nuances. Additionally, virtual reality (VR) technology is influential in understanding cultural competency within an individual's life and further increasing cultural competency (Akdere, et.al., 2021). Virtual reality can be used to assist with self-reporting to find a baseline for an individual's' cultural competency (Akdere, et.al., 2021). Therefore, an accurate understanding of an individual's starting point could be effective in designing a more personalized curriculum for adolescent development of cultural competency within the traditional setting.

Potentially, the impact of using VR goggles on the adolescent's development of cultural awareness could be significant and move an adolescent into the different levels of affective development (Efendi, Apriliyasari, Massie, Wong, Natalia, Utomo, Sunarya, Apriyanti, & Chen, 2023). The VR goggles could provide a medium where students receive and respond relatively easy to a new environment. However, movement throughout all levels of affective learning among adolescents would have to be determined by future research.

Creating Curiosity Driven Traditional Lessons

The last implication I want to discuss is increasing opportunities for curiosity driven assignments within the traditional classroom. Curiosity was a driving force in each of my participants and acted as a major change agent in their lives. Therefore, any type of cultural lesson that can tap into the curiosity of an individual could be important for affective development towards cultures (Holtbrugge & Engelhard, 2016). Increasing cultural competency through curiosity driven assignments could potentially develop within the traditional setting, but researchers would need to explore this assumption in future studies. A recommendation for future research is to analyze how cultural competency can be developed through curiosity driven assignments focused on the affective domain implemented within the traditional setting.

Several of my participants said their Spanish teachers were positive cultural informants for them during middle and high school. Therefore, it is vital foreign language teachers have a heightened awareness of the power of their position in an adolescent's cultural development (Sercu, 2006). This understanding can be developed by the global travel leaders having meaningful discussions with foreign language departments about the importance of being a cultural informant, especially in rural areas, to adolescents.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although significant identified barriers exist in implementing global travel experiences (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Cengelci, 2013; Dewitt & Storksdieck, 2008; Greene et al., 2014; Higgins et al., 2012; Trimble, 2015; Veverka, 2015; Wheeler, 2011), if similar results were replicated with a larger, more diverse population it would be

beneficial for understanding to what extent people from all backgrounds and genders can adapt their behaviors toward diversity. My study was done using only female adolescents from a rural area. Including more diversity in future studies could give insight into whether similar facets of cultural development would be shared among a broader participant pool. Further, as I established in Chapter Two, there are major differences between the young adult and the adolescent learner (Beltz, 2018; Cohen et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2018). Therefore, it would be beneficial for future studies to explore younger students to see if similar results are generated. Teaching children cultural development within the affective domain at a younger age might lead to stronger cultural frameworks in adulthood.

Finances

Expenses associated with global travel are a major deterrent for adolescent travel (Higgins et al., 2012; Trimble, 2015). Therefore, future researchers need to analyze how to reduce the financial barrier to travel. Among my participants, three were upper middle class, two were middle class, and one was lower class at the time of travel. My lower-class participant said her mom sacrificed getting another family vehicle to pay for her to travel. This level of sacrifice indicated her mother may have had a deeper understanding of how valuable the experience would be for her daughter. Understanding ways to decrease financial burdens is imperative to seeing an increase in rural adolescent's ability to travel abroad. Two participants in my study found financial assistance by asking community businesses and individuals for donations and through fundraising. Even with using these financial strategies to help offset the cost of the trip, the majority of the cost was still the parent's responsibility. Therefore, analyzing parents who have little access

to resources for their children to take these types of travel experiences would add to an understanding of how parents perceive the value of global travel and the impact of global travel on their child's future growth. As seen with my participant's mother, a deeper understanding of the added value to her daughter's life as a result of this trip was apparent because she sacrificed a car to send her on this trip. A study analyzing parent's perceptions of the value of global travel would guide future understanding of how to generate discussions and find ways to eliminate financial burdens for the most marginalized groups in society. A common understanding among educators is the negative impact of poverty on educational achievement (Tienken, 2012). Global travel should not be exclusive to middle- and upper-class students but accessible to all students. However, the option for travel may not even be available if the parent does not understand the value of the travel for their child, especially parents without the financial means needed. Therefore, researching parent's perceptions of global travel would generate an understanding of what sacrifices parents would make.

Time Abroad and Time Post-Trip

I have two suggestions for future researchers that both deal with time. First, understanding exactly what minimal time frame can promote depth within one's cultural framework through affective development could lead to more affordable options for future travel excursions, a barrier heavily identified in the research and discussed above (Greene et al. 2014). I found that high levels of cultural competency can result from a short-term global travel experience. Therefore, future researchers should evaluate whether adolescents who engage in shorter time frames, less than nine days, abroad can have similar outcomes. Research done by Kohlbry (2016) and Le et al. (2013) found

similar results, suggesting significant enhancements in cultural competency can occur in a very short time frame, even as short as one-day trips. Obtaining a more exact time frame could lead to a deeper understanding in how to generate more culturally successful global travel experiences at a lower financial cost.

The second suggestion for future research is to analyze participants immediately upon return from their experience. My study was rooted in affective development, and historically there have been challenges associated with evaluating whether an individual had grown in the affective domain (Pierre & Oughton, 2007). Although educators struggle measuring affective development (Griffith & Nyugen, 2006), the research method I used in this study allowed me to measure perceived affective change. One reason I was able to effectively measure affective growth was through evaluating participants a significant time after they actually had their travel experience, as described in Chapter Three. This evaluation method was intentionally done to enhance each participant's ability to detect true perceived changes within all levels of their development (Lally, et al., 2010). However, future researchers should also evaluate adolescent participants immediately upon return of a global travel experience to analyze how much perceived change happens in a shorter reflection window. Using a shorter reflection window may generate more emotional responses but will unlikely yield evidence of behavioral changes based on internal changes. However, analyzing the effect of a shorter reflection time on perceived cultural changes within the participant is valuable for understanding what observations and interactions yield emotional responses among participants. This understanding could then be used in the development of a more cost efficient and time effective travel program.

Reducing travel costs and creating a successful tour focused on increasing cultural competency were both discussed in implications for practice. Combining the two recommendations discussed above would develop an understanding of how to alleviate associated costs through the reduction of time in a location. Additionally, understanding what observations and interactions provoke emotional responses would help develop a more concise tour program. Therefore, future research using these two suggestions would ensure the development of a more reliable culturally competent tour.

Curiosity

I identified curiosity not only as the catalyst for signing up to go on a global travel experience but essential for continued development while *on tour*. Curiosity was present in all the participants who were engaging and responding to their environment.

Therefore, more studies should focus on the development of culturally curious learners in childhood and adolescence. Investigating what cultural elements in one's home society could spark an individual's natural desire to learn more about cultural diversity at a much younger age would be valuable for not only increasing cultural competency at home but also abroad. This understanding could lead to increased participation within global travel experiences, a method my participants perceived increased cultural competency.

Potential Transformative Domestic Travel Opportunities

In terms of pre-existing cultural competency, all my participants lacked cultural competency prior to travel. Therefore, a future study should be done to identify students with low cultural competencies and explore how they interact with domestic field trips focused on cultural environments. For example, analyzing how low competency participants engage with a short-term cultural fair where cultural differences identified

within my study are present: language, currency, and food. Berte & Jones (2014) claimed field trips ranked highest as the most effective teaching strategy. If the identified overall problem is students and workers lacking cultural competency, and an identified growth agent is global travel, then finding other cultural experiences (which are not financially burdensome) where development could occur would be relevant for future research.

Limitations of this Study

Limitations of this study include my established relationship with the participants, the online discussion method, restrictions inherent of using a travel company, and the population size. The value of an established relationship with each participant was discussed in Chapter Three where I described how participants had a trusting relationship with me and because of that were more willing to be honest and open throughout the data collection interview process (Maxwell, 2013). This relationship could be seen as a limitation because if a participant already knows the researcher, they could say things the researcher wants to hear. However, I believe my study was strengthened by the already established relationship because participants felt safe and gave extremely detailed explanations to each question. Perhaps the best indicator participants felt safe with me was comparing the responses of the private interviews against the group online discussions. The private interviews yielded rich, detailed, intimate responses whereas the group online discussions did not yield rich, detailed responses.

The next limitation was the data collection method of the online discussion. Although the online discussion method provided additional insight not provided in the interviews, the added value to the overall research project was not

justified. Furthermore, the tradeoff of the online discussion forfeited the participants' complete anonymity because each participant was aware of others in the group. Further, while the participants were very open, intimate, and vulnerable in the face to face, one on one interviews, the online discussions did not yield the same type of data. The responses were more generic, less focused, and more sporadic than interview responses. In future studies, if a discussion group is desired by the researcher, I would suggest having synchronous face to face discussion groups rather than an online discussion board. However, if an online discussion board is necessary, I suggest using a platform in which participants can remain anonymous.

Human interaction was found to be imperative in developing growth among the participants. However, all participants traveled using either Education First or Explorica Tours travel companies and the time allotted for human interaction is inherently limited based on the overarching mission of the tour design. While some tours offer service learning or language immersion, the design of the tour taken with these participants was to maximize the time *on tour* to see as many historical sites and elements as possible in the time frame allotted. Therefore, the most potentially impactful growth moments were limited based on the tour design.

Due to the value of the aforementioned relationship between the participant and the researcher, the population was limited to students who had traveled with the researcher. With the financial barrier of global travel, in terms of median income in the area studied, the population was naturally further limited. Unlike study abroad programs, financial aid is not available for high school adolescent travel, which added another limitation for the available population. Therefore, the sample size was reflective only of

rural students representing two races and one gender; a future study is needed to include additional races, gender diversity, and urban students to understand to what extent more diverse populations can perceive increased cultural competency as a result of global travel.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand and explore cultural development among adolescents from the transformational experience of global travel because existing empirical studies on the topic focused mostly on experiences of college age students. Perceived increased cultural competencies of adolescents due to a global travel experience and a lasting behavioral impact on participants' lives was confirmed through this study. Two elements in particular that made this study unique included the length of travel being shorter than college travel abroad programs (8-14 days versus 8-16 weeks), and participants were adolescents recruited from rural communities with limited access and exposure to cultural diversity. The findings of this study carry important implications that indicate significant change can occur within the rural adolescent resulting from a short-term global travel experience. Rural adolescents engaging in the transformative learning experience of global travel can expect to see cultural development through situated experiences that yield strong emotional reactions. Specifically, adolescents can adopt an attitudinal mindset shift to reflect an increase in valuing diversity, reorganizing their national self-identity, and engaging in more inclusive behaviors consistent with a new mindset.

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APPENDIX A: Initial Recruitment E-Mail for Potential Participants

APPENDIX A: Initial Recruitment E-Mail for Potential Participants

Hello,

My name is Farran Burnette. I am currently pursuing my doctoral degree in Curriculum & Instruction through Valdosta State University. As a doctoral student, I am conducting research regarding the impact of global travel on the adolescent.

As a teacher who strives to create global travel opportunities for adolescents, your experience with global travel during your adolescence would be valuable to my study. In my study, I want to investigate your experience with global travel and whether you report any soft skill development as a result of your experience. Further, I would like to explore what moments, experiences, or interactions have changed you. If you choose to be a part of this study, here is what will happen:

You and I will have three conversations (interviews), over the course of 5 weeks, where I will ask a range of questions about your experience with global travel. In addition to the individual interviews, during the 5 weeks, you will participate in an online focus group with others who traveled during their adolescence. In the online group, you will be have a prompt to respond to each week, as well as the ability to respond to others.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in the interview and focus forum, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in the study. Your identity will be kept confidential in the reporting of results.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please e-mail me back at fburnette@valdosta.edu or call or text at 299-263-0776.

Sincerely,

Farran Burnette

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Farran Burnette by sending me an email at fburnette@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

APPENDIX B: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval



**Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants**

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04231-2021

Responsible Researcher(s): Farran
Burnette

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Herbert Fiester

Project Title: *A Qualitative Study into how Rural Adolescents Experience Travel Abroad.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations **category 2**. If the nature of the research changes such that exemption criteria no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research study.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Exempt protocol guidelines **permit** the recording of interviews, provided the recordings are made to create an accurate transcript. Upon creation of the transcript, the recorded interview session must be deleted immediately from all devices. Exempt guidelines **prohibit** the collection, storage, and/or sharing of recordings.*
- *To maintain participant confidentiality, pseudonym lists must be kept in a separate file, from corresponding name lists, email addresses, etc.*
- *As part of the informed consent process, interview and focus group recordings must document the researcher reading aloud the research consent statement, confirming participant's understanding, and establishing willingness to take part in the interview or focus group.*
- *Participants must be offered a copy of the research consent statement.*
- *Upon completion of the research study, collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*

If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.

Elizabeth Ann Olphie 10.27.2021

application. Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator
irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Thank you for submitting an IRB

Please direct questions to

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX C: Individual Interview & Online Focus Group Consent Script

Consent to Participate in Research

Phase I & II: Individual Interviews & Online Focus Group

The following statement will be read aloud and audio recorded at the start of each interview and will also be posted in the online focus group as the top action item.

You are being asked to participate in a series of interviews as part of a research study entitled, “A Qualitative Study into how Rural Adolescents Experience Travel Abroad,” which is being conducted by Farran Burnette, a student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of adolescents who engaged in global travel. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about development of adolescents as a result of global travel. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study.

Participation in the interviews will include three separate 90-minute sessions and participation in the online focus forum will be at least one response to a given prompt for five consecutive weeks. The interviews will be audio taped to capture authenticity in opinions, concerns, and ideas. Once the recordings have been transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. This research study is confidential. You will be assigned a pseudonym for use in any written documents associated with this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to not participate, to stop responding at any time, or to skip questions you do not want to answer.

You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older. You may be contacted after the interview if there are additional questions relating to your experience and/or feedback. Do you have any questions?

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Farran Burnette at fburnette@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

APPENDIX D: Individual Semi-Structured Interview

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According to Seidman (2013) interview number one will have the goal of putting the participant's experience in context. Interview intent is to reconstruct their lives: family, neighborhood, friends, work, and school. I will focus on anything in their life that had a relationship with global travel, and then develop the focus for the study, making certain to not ask why they participated in the global travel, but rather asking how they came to be a participant. A pilot interview was done to ensure the questions developed were effective in garnering rich data to answer the research questions. Additional sub-questions were created as a result. Below are the base questions for Interview One.

Interview #1 Questions

1. Was travel, whether domestic or international, a focus in your household growing up? Elaborate.
 - a. Were your travel experiences the same type of vacation each year or did you explore new territory?
 - b. Were any of your travel experiences educational in nature or just for fun?
 - c. Was there any type of learning taking place you could remember (examples could be sifting sand, exploring caves, understanding tidal pulls, etc.)
 - d. Do you remember being inquisitive about anything on any one of your travel excursions?

2. What was your first travel memory? What location?
 - a. Do you remember what essentials were needed for this particular travel location?
 - b. At the travel location, did you inquire about things with adults or with peer relationships?
 - c. Depending on parent's marital status, questions regarding travel with friends versus parents can be asked here.
3. What was your first memory of any international event (if need prompting examples could be war, conflict, royal wedding, Olympics, World Cup) and what details do you remember from the event?
 - a. How did you know this international event was an important event?
 - b. How were the international events you remembered framed to you as a child?
 - c. Do you remember the feelings associated with the event? (pride, anger, fear, scared, excited)
 - i. Do you know where those feelings stemmed from? Can you identify either tangible or intangible items that encouraged those feelings?
 - d. Who were the people that were informing you about these events? (teacher, parents, media, internet)
 - e. Can you identify how you felt towards the peoples of this particular event you are discussing?

4. Growing up, how did you perceive and interact with people from other cultural backgrounds or ethnicities?
 - a. What type of diversity would you say you were exposed to?
(ethnicity, race, cultural)
 - b. Do you believe there was a lack of exposure to diversity for you growing up? If so, can you explain?
 - c. What specific demographics were you exposed to growing up?
 - d. What are your earliest memories of interactions with those who were racially, culturally, or ethnically different than you?
 - e. In terms of interactions, can you give specific examples in your childhood where you engaged, at a friend level, with those of a different ethnicity? (birthday parties, spend the night party)
 - f. If interaction and friendships were limited, was there ever any explanation for those limitations?

5. Growing up, was there anyone in your life from another country and if so, how close were you to that person? Elaborate.
 - a. If no exposure, could you identify someone who vividly remember being significantly culturally different than you growing up?
 - b. What made you recognize there were differences between you and that particular person?
 - c. How did those differences make you feel about the person and about yourself?
 - d. If exposed to another person, questions b and c apply.

6. What opportunities, prior to this particular global experience, did you have to travel internationally (family, church, school)?
 - a. If no opportunity presented itself, move straight into question #8.
 - b. If opportunity presented itself, what were the factors that helped you decide not to explore that prior opportunity? (parents, money, age)
7. In school and through learning, did you feel you had a heightened curiosity about the various places and cultures you learned about?
 - a. If no, was there any moment you remember in school wanting to know about another culture?
 - b. In regards to this culture, how do you remember thinking about this group of people or this place?
 - c. How was this group of people or place framed to you in your classroom?
 - d. Looking back on your childhood, what type of emotions did you feel towards those peoples based on what you learned specifically in school?
 - e. Was there ever a moment you remember learning something in school, talking to your parents about it at home, and them telling you something in contrast to the teacher about another culture or people group?
8. Were there any barriers to your ability to travel throughout your childhood or adolescence?

- a. If funding was an issue, how did you break through that barrier to go on this travel experience?
 - b. If safety was an issue, how did you break through that barrier to go on this travel experience?
 - c. If opportunity was an issue, move to question #9.
9. When presented with the opportunity with this particular travel experience, what emotions surrounded your decision to sign up?
 10. Upon reflection, can you identify any significant moments in your childhood that shaped your perception of wanting to explore outside the USA?
 11. Based on the location of travel, what beliefs did you have about the particular culture, geography, peoples, belief systems, or traditions before travel?
 12. Based on the location of travel, what pre-existing views did you have about the people groups you were going to come in contact with?

The second interview will be used to find the concrete details of the global travel experience (Siedman, 2013). In this interview, I will attempt to help the participant recreate their global experience to seek out details on which opinions may be built. For this interview, the goal will be to get the participant to detail each moment of each day of their trip from start to finish, getting as many details as possible. I will ask questions that help the participant find the details in each interaction from the experience. For example, the participants interactions with the flight, airport, flight attendants, fellow travelers (from same school and other schools), chaperones, each local guide, tour director,

restaurant workers, hotel attendants, museum officials, and anyone they come into contact with. These reflections can help participant's explore any potential soft skill development they may have developed as a result of the experience. Below are the base questions for Interview Two.

Interview #2 Questions

1. Starting with day one, explain your emotions, perceptions, or interactions on the flight to your destination.
 - a. Whatever the identified emotion was, what was their perception of the emotion?
 - b. How did engaging with the flight attendants, food, or other passengers feel to you?
 - c. What pre-conceived notions did you have about the location you were traveling to?
2. Once landing, what were your immediate thoughts once you walked off the airplane and into a different country with a different language and different customs?
 - a. What were the first things you noticed? Language, signs, bathrooms, infrastructure, guard dogs/police, etc.
3. Were there any particular moments from your first interactions abroad that stood out to you in particular?
 - a. Who met you first at the airport? The transfers?
 - b. Were you nervous at all about getting into the transfer from the airport to the next location via bus? Explain.

- c. Did the transfer attendant ease your concerns, if any, with the transfer?
Explain.
 - d. Give a description of the transfer attendant.
- 4. Explain your reaction to the language barrier that naturally exists when traveling abroad. How did you find yourself compensating for your lack of language knowledge?
 - a. When was the moment you realized you had lost control of the situation?
 - b. How did you try and find ways to communicate?
 - c. Did you find yourself learning to listen more? Explain.
 - d. How dependent were you on others for communication? How did this dependency make you feel?
- 5. Can you describe a day of travel from the moment you woke up to the moment you went to sleep? Give as much detail as possible about your interactions with people, customs, travel, food, and location.
 - a. What did you first notice about the food?
 - b. Were there any cultural traditions surrounding eating that were interesting to you?
 - c. Did you have any type of interaction that was interesting or noteworthy to you? Something that was different from how you would have expected things to be?

- d. Did you notice anything different about the location, the geography or landscape of the location? How did geography shape the way tradition evolved in your travel location?
 - e. Did you notice a difference in the way people engaged with you? Were they friendly, stand-offish, rude, or indifferent? Explain your perception of how people interacted with you.
6. Thinking about that same day you just described, are there moments you wish you could have altered? Interacted more with certain people, places, etc. and why?
- a. Do you feel like you were able to get a real understanding of the location you traveled? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you feel like you gained insight into some traditions that you did not realize existed prior to this trip?
 - c. Were there any interactions you wish you would have had?
 - d. Were you nervous or scared to have interactions with people from the travel location?
7. Of all the moments of your trip, what are the top three and why?
- a. Do you feel like these moments had more to do with personal interactions, personal excitement, or historical significance?
 - b. Why do you remember these particular moments on the trip?
 - c. Can you describe your emotions now when you think about these moments?

8. On the type of trip you took, so much of the itinerary and interactions with locals can be limited. However, if you were to describe the skills one needs for global travel, what would they be?
 - a. Do you think it is important to understand cultural traditions among different peoples for effective interactions?
 - b. Did you learn how to identify when to be passive or aggressive to get what you needed?
 - c. Did you use map skills? Develop map skills?
 - d. Did you learn how to find ways around communication barriers?
 - e. Did you find importance of planning and organization to effectiveness of the trip?
9. Were there any negative interactions on your trip? If so, could you explain the interaction(s) and how you felt as a result?
 - a. Were there times on this trip you felt stressed? Were there times you felt unsure of why you took the trip?
10. Were there any particular cultural traditions that surprised you or made you really contemplate the reasoning behind the tradition?
11. In your travel location, what beliefs that you had prior to travel were manifested as a result of the travel? What types of things did you see on this trip that challenged your pre-existing beliefs?

The purpose of the last interview is to find meaning within the participant's experience, based on their own reflections (Seidman, 2013). A sample question may be, "Given what you have said about your life before you experienced global travel and

given what you have said about global travel, how do you understand travel in your life?” This line of questioning requires the participant to explore interactive factors within their lives which in turn should impart meaning for the participant (Seidman, 2013). Below are the base questions for Interview Three.

Interview #3 Questions

1. Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, are there any cultural traditions you had an incomplete or incorrect pre-existing view of that changed as a result of your interactions?
 - a. Do you find yourself being challenged by some of the new information you learned as a result of your trip? Has it been difficult to implement real change into your life?
2. Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, are there any beliefs you had about a particular culture that were affirmed and reinforced as a result of your experience?
 - a. What were some things you learned from this trip you didn't expect to learn?
3. Thinking back now, are there any skills you believe you either developed or enhanced based on this experience? Explain.
 - a. Thinking upon the following skills: communication, collaboration, time management, leadership, empathy, compassion, stress management, persuasion, openness to criticism, adaptability, or conflict management – can you identify moments where you felt one of those was developing or enhancing?

4. Reflecting upon what you have said, could you explain how you use any skills you may have developed or enhanced from this experience in your life now?
 - a. Go back through the list, and look at real life examples where you implemented any of the above skills.
 - b. Where did you find yourself in your minds-eye versus reality?
 - c. Do you feel like you developed a new level of patience or understanding from developing any of the above skills?
5. Given what you have said in the prior interviews, how would you describe your own distinct American values as a result of global travel? Do you feel your pride in being an American deepen or lessen as a result of your experience?
 - a. What were some of the values you found yourself proud of?
 - b. What were some things you found yourself upset to be associated with America?
 - c. If decisions made by decision makers in America negatively impacted the location, would you carry any type of ownership of that?
 - d. How do you reconcile the warring state of American pride and subsequent disappointment of American economic interest overseas?
6. Upon reflection, how do you view or interact with people who are culturally or ethnically different from you as a result of this experience?
 - a. Were there any pre-conceived ideas you were using to cast broad generalizations or stereotypes?

- b. Do you find yourself analyzing your internal cues towards diverse peoples in a different way based on your experience?
- 7. Upon reflection of this experience, how do you understand cultural diversity in your life?
 - a. Do you feel more grounded in why people behave the way they do based on their background?
 - b. Do you find yourself humanizing people more as a result of your experience?
- 8. Cultural competency is defined loosely as the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from your own. Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, how do you, if you do, implement cultural competency in your life?
 - a. Thinking of someone who has a different perspective or value system as you, can you identify how you feel towards them?
 - b. Has travel opened you up to the idea of seeing why people act in certain ways and given you a deeper understanding and appreciation for those peoples?
 - c. Are you genuinely curious or interested in people who are different from you? If so, when did you find yourself really desiring to know more about diverse people groups?
- 9. Transformative learning is loosely defined as the process of using a prior construct to construe a new or revised construct of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future behavior or action. Given what you have

said about your life prior to this experience, would you label this as a transformative learning experience in your life? Why?

10. Given what you have said about your life prior to this travel experience and given what you have said about your experience, how do you understand global travel in your life?

- a. In any given moment, you may not have realization of how something changed you. Do you think differently about places, peoples, cultures, and beliefs then you did before the experience?

APPENDIX E: Online Focus Group Prompts

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Each week will host a focal discussion prompt for the participants to answer individually, but can see, share, respond, and interact with the other participants. Participants will have all had global travel experiences, but not necessarily to the same locations or with the same people. Therefore, the questions will focus on common emergent themes within the individual interviews for an opportunity to explore more depth of the experience. Below are discussion prompts for each week.

Week One Prompt helps answer RQs 1 and 3.

Week Two Prompt helps answer RQs 1, 2, & 3.

Week Three Prompt helps answer RQs 1, 2, & 3.

Week Four Prompt helps answer RQs 1, 2, & 3.

Week Five Prompt helps answer RQs 1, 2, & 3.

Week One Prompt: “Please give the age you were at the time of this travel experience, the locations you traveled, one reason you remember wanting to experience global travel, and one memory you had from the experience that you felt changed by.”

Week Two Prompt: “First, thinking on your childhood memories, describe a moment when you interacted with someone culturally different than you and what that experience was like - try to describe emotions, feelings, tone. Second, think about a moment on your trip when you interacted with someone culturally different than you and describe what that experience was like – try to describe all of the emotions you can remember.”

Week Three Prompt: “Thinking back on your travel experience, if you had one, please describe a moment on your trip you felt like a cultural outsider and how you managed

those emotions and the situation. Conversely, again, if you had one, please describe a moment you felt like a cultural insider and what emotions you felt.”

Week Four Prompt: “Some major skills identified as “soft skills” are time management, communication, positivity, cooperation, dependability, commitment, creativity, flexibility, and leadership. Can you describe some moments on your trip when you felt you were using some of the skills mentioned? If so, can you describe the events, moments, or interactions in which each of those skills were used?”

Week Five Prompt: “First, could you share the moment on the trip that had the greatest impact on you as an individual. Second, do you in any way feel changed as a result of your global travel experience? If so, please explain. To end our time together, is there anything you would like to share about your experience you previously did not have an opportunity to share, were nervous about sharing, or remembered something you forgot and now want to share? Please do.”

APPENDIX F: Evaluative Factors for Affective Development

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Level	Category	Action	Themes	Associated Verbs
1	Receiving	<i>Is the learner responding to or aware of the environment?</i>	Awareness	Accept, ask, attend, choose,
			Selective	describe, develop, follow, give,
			Attention	hold, identify, locate, name, recognize, use
2	Responding	<i>Can the learner show a new behavior due to an experience?</i>	Curiosity	Answer, assist, complete,
			Seeking	comply, conform, cooperate,
			Interested	discuss, help, greet, examine, label, perform, respond, tell
3	Valuing	<i>Does the learner show involvement and commitment?</i>	Attitudes	Accept, complete, defend, describe, devote, explain,
			Appreciation	follow, form, invite, join, justify, propose, read, seek,
4	Organizing	<i>How does the learner make sense of the new value in relation to their existing one?</i>	Internal	Adhere, alter, arrange, codify,
			Integration	combine, compare, defend,
			of New	discriminate, explain,
			Value	generalize, identify, integrate, modify, order, organize, prepare, relate, systemize
5	Characterizing	<i>Does the learner act consistently</i>	External	Act, discriminate, display,
			Actions	influence, internalize, listen,
			reflect	modify, perform, practice,

<i>with the new</i>	Internal	propose, qualify, question,
<i>value?</i>	Change	serve, solve, use, verify