

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Counseling

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Searching for a “Home”: Examining the Experiences of Confucius Asian College Students with Third Culture Kid Backgrounds

Date: October 22nd, 2020
Time: 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract

Third culture kids (TCKs) spend their childhood and adolescence outside of their home countries. Because of their unique backgrounds, TCKs and adult TCKs face challenges including identity development, low self-esteem, lack of connection with their home countries, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, adjustment disorder, and others. Although the number of TCKs is increasing due to globalization, this population has been understudied. Moreover, most existing research has focused on TCKs in Western countries. Few researchers have studied Confucius Asian adult TCKs; that is, adult TCKs from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and others. Confucius Asian countries have collectivistic cultures that value community harmony and cohesiveness above individuality. TCKs and adult TCKs of Confucius Asian descent face unique challenges. The present study focused on how Confucius Asian adult TCKs develop their sense of belonging in college. Using a phenomenological method, 11 individuals identifying as Confucius Asian adult TCKs were asked about their experiences of international mobile lifestyles to identify their struggles and the support systems higher education institutions can offer. There were five interview questions, and the data were analyzed to extract the essence of the reported phenomenon among the participants, which brought more knowledge about their sense of belonging and to learn more about the shared phenomenon among this population.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Phillip Waalkes, Ph.D., Chairperson
Emily Brown, Ph.D.
M. Lee Nelson, Ph.D.
Susan Kashubeck-West, Ph.D.