Belonging everywhere and nowhere:
The struggle of Third Culture Kids and their need for support in early childhood education and care

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Have you ever met a person who was born in Germany to an Indian father and Swiss mother, who grew up in New Zealand and now lives in Guatemala? These Third Culture Kids, or TCKs for short, are a growing demographic group in this globalised world yet, paradoxally, are not well known nor studied.

Belonging everywhere and nowhere: The struggle of Third Culture Kids and their need for support in early childhood education and care is an academic study of children who have spent their formative years (up to 18 years) in a culture(s) that is different from their parents' culture(s), most often abroad in a country that is not their "passport" or "home" country, as well as their need for support in early childhood education and care. The research question is "is it important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?".

The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care states that children's various cultural and linguistic backgrounds are perceived to enrich the community and the development of cultural identities and self-esteem is supported in early childhood education and care.

The material for this thesis was gathered through an online survey in April 2019. 31 Third Culture Kids answered the questionnaire. Results indicate that 73% of the TCKs did not receive any support when they were under 7 years old, the age when one is in early childhood education, but 48% would have needed it. In addition, even though 52% feel they would not have needed support when they were under 7 years old, but rather later in life when they were older, 68% of the TCKs recognised receiving early support would have helped them later on in life. 100% find it important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care.

Analysis of the results hints of the struggles the TCKs have struggled with within their lives due to their highly mobile background. When young many worried about blending in; their appearance, language and "being normal" or fitting in. As the TCK's grew older their hardships focused more on the sense of belonging, finding "home" and building long-lasting relationships; finding or, rather, building their roots.

To conclude, support should be provided in early childhood education and care for Third Culture Kids, it is indeed important.

Recommendations for the future from TCKs themselves include addressing the issue and open discussion. This would make them feel acknowledged, accepted and less alone and speaking about their global background would ease their later lives.

Keywords: third culture kids, struggle, support, culture, multicultural, early childhood education

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1   Introduction

"TCKs are the prototype citizen of the future". This was stated by sociologist Ted Ward in 1984 (TCKidNOW 2019). TCKs, or Third Culture Kids, indeed are a growing demographic group which is why it is paradoxal how little is known of them.

This thesis is a study of Third Culture Kids and their need for support in early childhood education and care. The main objective is to define what or who is a "Third Culture Kid" and by doing so raise awareness of the term and demographic group as well as to find out should we be supporting these children in early childhood education and care. The research question of this thesis is "is it important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?".

After briefly introducing the topic, objective and structure of this thesis, the literature review will go over Third Culture Kids with some history, qualifications, general characteristics and advantages and challenges of a TCK background. As Third Culture Kids as a topic has been studied very little as far as scientific research goes, the literature review will primarily be focusing on why this is a current emerging topic and in desperate need of further exploration. The third chapter will break down why the number of Third Culture Kids is on the rise, describing globalisation and information and communication technology, migration, aviation, population growth and travelling as a trend. Next, Finnish legal regulations and what they have to say about diversity and multilingualism will be looked at in chapter 4, further considering the need for support for Third Culture Kids. Chapter 5 presents the methodology of this study; the aim and research question, the chosen qualitative survey method, how data was collected, the results, content analysis, reliability, validity and generalizability, ethical issues and research limitations will all be discussed. Chapter 6, Discussion, focuses on what the results mean, who can benefit from the results and some practical suggestions how kindergartens and day cares can support Third Culture Kids. Finally, the conclusion includes a brief summary of what has been studied and found out, what this thesis has proven and how these findings should be utilised in early childhood education and care. It also showcases some personal reflection of this thesis process and suggestions for improvement, shall anyone wish to follow these footsteps.

2   Third Culture Kids

The term "Third Culture" was first coined by the American couple, both social scientists Drs. John and Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950's. They lived in India with their children on two separate occasions for a year at a time and studied Americans who lived there while working as foreign service officers, missionaries, technical aid workers, businessmen, educators and media representatives. During their stay they also met other migrants from different countries and discovered the expatriates had formed a lifestyle that was different from both their original home culture and new host culture, but that they all shared in that foreign setting, despite where they had all come from. To best describe this unique lifestyle called the "Third Culture", the Useems defined the **first culture** as the home culture the adults had come from and the **second culture** they said was the new host culture they lived in. They then characterized the shared culture of the expatriate community to be the **"third culture"**, which is a culture *in between* cultures. (Pollock & Van Reken 2001)

TCKidNOW (2019b) continues, that they started naming the children that accompanied their parents into a foreign culture as "Third Culture Kids". This is because the children are still developing and building their identity as they are integrating parts of their birth culture (the first culture) and their host culture (second culture) into one and as a result, creating and living in a unique third culture.

This chapter will shine a light on Third Culture Kids, often abbreviated as TCKs, in general. Who qualifies as a TCK and what kind of a background it entails will be discussed. Common characteristics as well as the advantages and hardships of a TCK childhood will be examined in the following.

2.1   Who is a TCK?

Simply put, a Third Culture Kid is a child who has grown up internationally. There are several reasons for why this could be; his or her parents may have worked or studied abroad, their family may have immigrated, perhaps his or her parents are from different countries thus being a multicultural and/or multiracial family, he or she may be a child of a minority or be adopted. Crossman mentions that the common thread is that "these children grow up 'in between' – in between two or more countries, cultures, languages – even if they live in the one place" (2016). Figure 1. below presents Van Reken's Third Culture Model, in which this "in between" world, or "Neither/Nor World", as Van Reken calls it, is clearly visible.
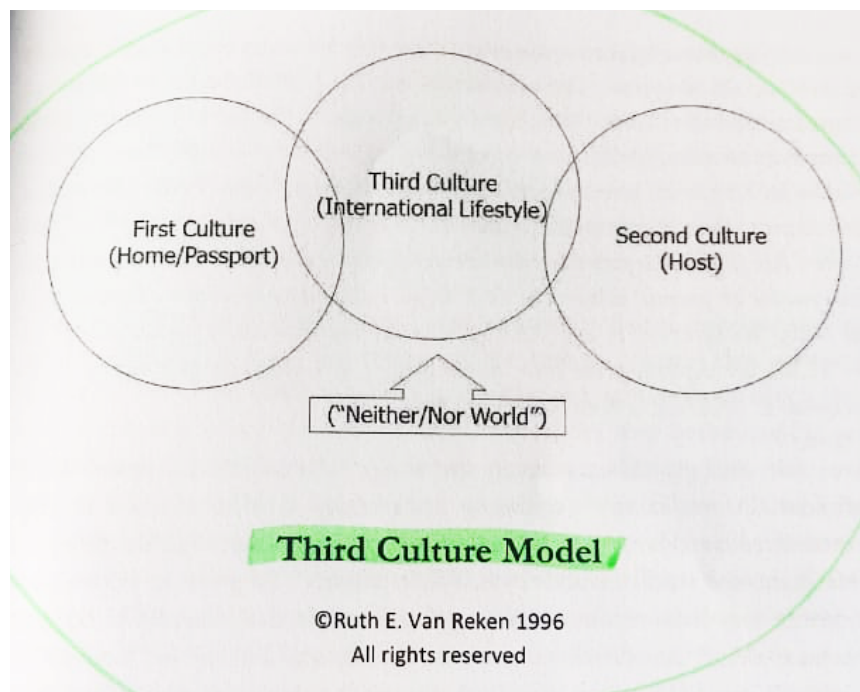
Figure 1. The Third Culture Model by Ruth E. Van Reken 1996. (Photo taken from the book Misunderstood: The Impact of Growing Up Overseas in the 21st Century, Crossman 2016)

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.
>
> Pollock & Van Reken (2001)

The above quote brings us to where TCK's assimilate "home" with. It is oftentimes not a place but rather people; family, friends and likeminded TCK's. As Bushong (2013) put it, "the sense of connection with others who have lived a like experience is strong among TCKs because *they share the life experiences of being mobile in a cross-cultural world.*" Pollock & Van Reken continue, that the international mobile experiences that TCKs share tend to affect the deeper levels of their personal and cultural being (2001). This is the reason why someone who was born in Italy and grew up in Libya may find more in common and a build a more profound friendship with someone who was born in Hong Kong but grew up in San Francisco, than either one of them with people who are from Italy, Libya, Hong Kong or San Francisco.

2.2   General characteristics

Although each TCK, as every other person, is unique, there would be no term 'Third Culture Kid' if there are no general characteristics of such person. These characteristics stem from the global lifestyle, in which these children have to cope with frequent change and build their identity in the midst of transition. Crossman (2016) clarifies that as these characteristics may seem to be personality traits, they are in fact *logical reactions* to, and coping strategies for, international living. She mentions the following general characteristics:

- Being a '**global nomad**'. The term 'global nomad' by Barbara Schaetti embraces the life of travel and the sense of rootlessness. Many TCKs continue to move around the world when grown in search of the place they feel 'at home'. They have a constant itch to move.

- Having a **broader concept of home**. TCKs grow up in a place that is not 'home'. They feel attached to the place they live in but are legally bound to a country they may have only visited, if even that. This conflict can create identity struggles. To many TCKs 'home' is not one single physical location but rather with people – home is where their family/community is or situations where they feel 'at home', international settings and travelling, for instance.

- **Patriotism**. A touchy subject among TCKs; some are extremely biased towards their passport or host countries that it may scare or offend others. But more often than not their patriotism is less nationalistic and more global. TCKs can feel connected with more than just one country and use the languages, traditions and cultural traits of many places. They may support multiple countries in international sports competitions – their passport country, host country (or countries) and even the countries of fellow TCKs.

- Being **bi/multilingual**. Most TCKs are influenced by multiple languages. Some learn multiple languages from their parents, others are exposed to foreign languages in their surroundings: local nannies/caretakers, schools and local children they play with. Even those using just one language, may pick up various dialects of it. TCKs' accents and way of speaking may subconsciously change to match that of with whom they are speaking with, which may be considered funny or rude by others, leaving TCKs stunned as they mean no harm.

- The **cultural chameleon** -ability. Navigating between cultures teaches TCKs to change their behaviour to fit in better. The chameleon nature is adopted to make life easier, as cultures show respect, use verbal and body language, dress and behave differently.

While living in their host culture, TCKs are traditionally recognized as foreigners. At this time, feeling different is often understood and accepted, as they are originally from another country and possibly look different. However, upon returning to their home countries, many TCKs expect to finally fit in. **"Re-entry stress"** is caused by the false expectations of both TCKs and those in their home culture. The Cultural Identity Model by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken (see figure 2.) portrays TCKs' different relational patterns with their surrounding community.

Foreigner Look different Think different	**Hidden Immigrant** Look alike Think different
Adopted Look different Think alike	**Mirror** Look alike Think alike

Figure 2. The Cultural Identity Model (Photo taken from Pollock & Van Reken 2001)

Despite many, including the TCKs themselves, expect the returning TCKs to be in the "mirror" box, in which the person looks and thinks alike as those around them, many are in fact "hidden immigrants". People in this category have the physical appearance to fit in, yet they don't share a common worldview as their life experiences have been totally different. Those TCKs from multiracial families may also look different than the general population, rendering them "foreigners" in their home country, as well. The "adopted" may look different but in other ways fit in and have adapted to the culture, which often takes place in the host country. Kohls' Cultural Iceberg Model (see figure 3.) hints why many TCKs may return to their home country as "hidden immigrants" – because their core values have been shaped by one or more foreign cultures. They may look the same on the outside, but they think very differently than their peers on the inside.

THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

Food

Flags   Games

Literature   Dances   Festivals

Music   Fashion   Holidays

Language   Arts & Crafts   Performances

Communications Styles and Rules:
Facial Expressions   Gestures   Eye Contact
Personal Space   Touching   Body Language
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations
Handling and Displaying of Emotion   Tone of Voice

Attitudes toward:
Elders   Adolescents   Dependents
Rule   Expectations   Work   Authority
Cooperation vs. Competition
Relationships with Animals
Age   Sin   Death

Notions of:
Courtesy and Manners   Friendship
Leadership   Cleanliness   Modesty
Beauty

Concepts of:
Self   Time Past and Future
Fairness and Justice
Roles related to Age, Sex,
Class, Family, etc.

Approaches to:
Religion   Courtship   Marriage
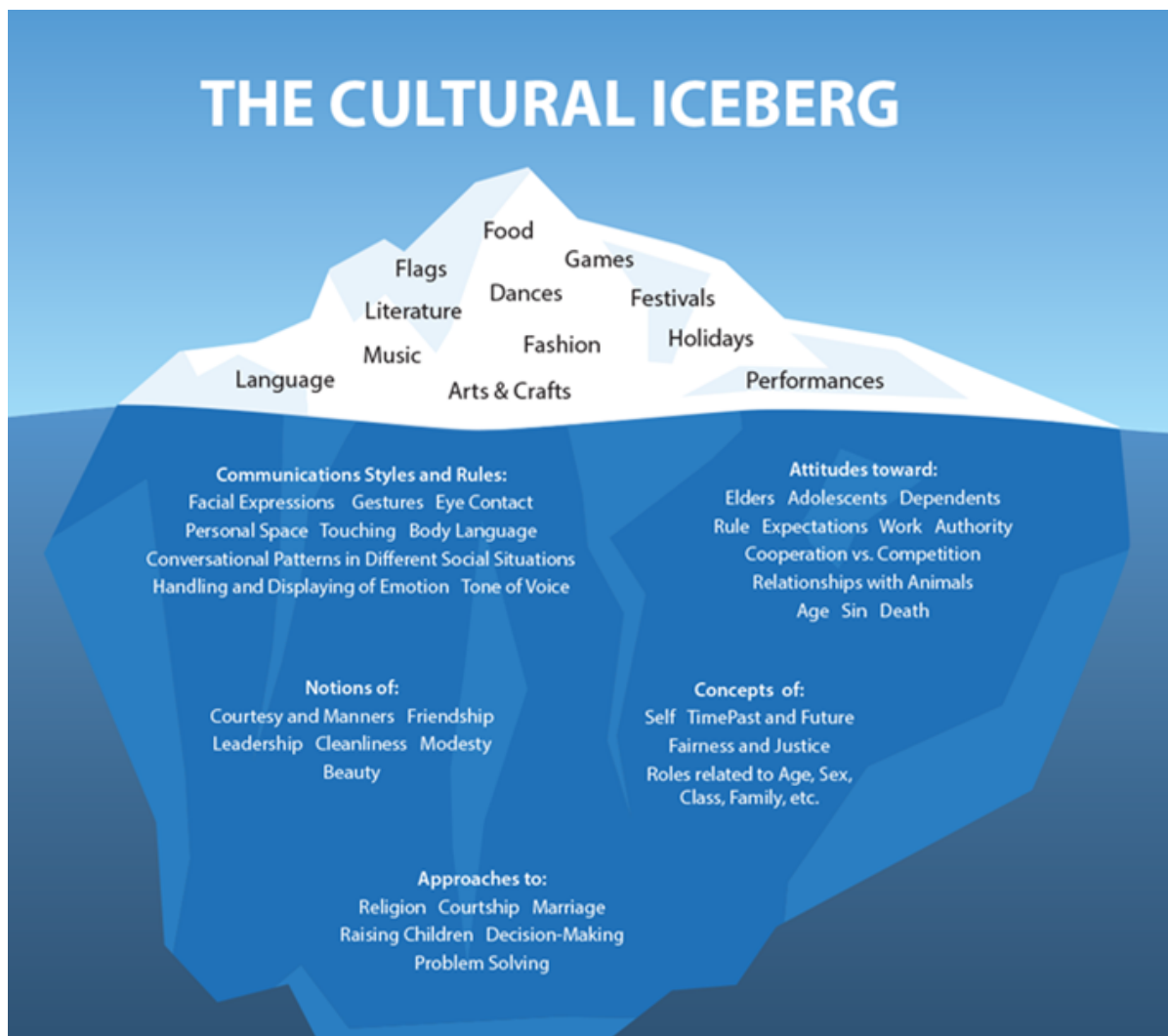Raising Children   Decision-Making
Problem Solving

Figure 3. L. Robert Kohls' Cultural Iceberg Model (Kohls 1996)

Kohls uses an iceberg as a metaphor for a human being. The 10% that is visible to others consists of the surface culture; language, clothes, music, holidays, literature and art which also includes pop culture. The simple question of "When is New Years?" can generate many different answers when presented to TCKs. 90% of the iceberg, and the human mind, is harder to see as it is beneath the surface. The core values include attitudes towards authority, work, justice, displaying respect, emotions and voicing thoughts, personal space, animals, death, marriage practices, raising children, elders, manners and so on.

2.3   Advantages and challenges of a TCK childhood

Much of what others have to learn through textbooks, TCKs learn just by living. Pollock believes the reason why TCKs struggle with their identity and sense of belonging is because they have had to repeatedly switch and adapt to various cultural rules in the first 18 years of their life (Pollock & Van Reken 2001). Growing up internationally surrounded by and adapting to foreign cultures, norms, languages and religions undoubtedly enriches the lives of these global nomads but it comes at a cost. On a positive note, the hardships are seen as challenges, which include a choice to face, deal with and grow from them instead of viewing them as liabilities, which are purely negative. The table below examines some advantages and challenges of a TCK childhood, mentioned by Pollock & Van Reken (2001).

Advantages	Challenges
Expanded worldview. TCKs learn very early on not only of the geographical differences but also how people view life from different perspectives. They understand that there can be more than one way to look at things and have a very "3D" view of the world.	**Confused Loyalties**. Even though on the outside it may seem that a TCK blends in, these chameleons may never develop a true cultural balance anywhere. Friends may start to notice how their behaviour changes in various settings and suspect they are not trustworthy. TCKs are torn where their actual loyalties lie.
Cross-cultural enrichment. Unlike visitors who may feel irritated that stores are closed for two hours mid-day, TCKs understand that siesta helps locals survive the climate and spend valuable time with their families. TCKs tend to develop a sense of ownership to cultures that are not "their own" and enjoy not just the surface culture but also learn to understand and appreciate behavioural differences.	**Being misunderstood** by locals, friends, teachers and even one's own parents. Parents often assume the experience living abroad is similar for the whole family, as they do it together. Yet it often is forgotten by parents that the children have not yet built their identity and rooted themselves strongly in one place, thus the time spent abroad in different cultures deeply affects who they become.
Adaptability. It is easy to "change colours" for socially and culturally considerate TCKs; sometimes to make their own life easier, other times blending in makes it easier for others to accept the TCKs	**Painful view of reality**. When an Ethiopian airplane crashes TCK's may feel sickened why it is only announced that no Finns (or

Less prejudice. Their circle of friends can be as politically, racially and religiously diverse as the United Nations and most truly enjoy interacting in such diversity. A common belief is that a person's background doesnt mean anything, the person itself is valued and anyone can be an equal participant in any given situation.

Early maturity. People often tell TCKs they seem (emotionally) older, like "mini-adults", and TCKs themselves feel more comfortable with older people than with their age group. This is largely due to their broad base of knowledge of geography, global events and politics, their early independence, multilingualism and experiences.

Living in the moment. Thanks to their transitory lifestyle, many TCKs have a sense of urgency that life has to be lived now. They may move away soon so no point in postponing climbing Mount Kilimanjaro or building that tree house. Others may view it as impulsiveness but TCKs generally get a lot of living done while others are deciding what they do or don't want to do and then planning for a suitable time.

locals of that country) died. To them, people of other nationalities are not only numbers in a news segment but valuable real-life human beings.

Judging others. As TCKs themselves consider people of all backgrounds as just that – people – they can easily disapprove of others not being so accepting.

Delayed adolescence. Ironically, although many TCKs mature earlier they also "grow up" later than their peers. Many have to conform to cultural compliance for the sake of their safety and/or surrounding culture, that they do not have the normal opportunity of challenging and testing parental values. Adolescence is often delayed into one's twenties. Identity is a tricky subject and often figured out as an adult, if that. TCKs generally marry and settle down later.

Rootlessness. TCKs can have roots in many different geographical places, but never deep enough to truly call one place home. Their parents may also live in a country they are not familiar with or may have split up and live in different countries.

Restlessness. The migratory instinct makes TCKs feel that what they have here and right now is temporary but after school, getting a job or buying a house they will settle down. The present is never enough – something is lacking. The next place will be home. This restlessness keeps them moving.

Table 1. The advantages and challenges of a TCK childhood (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001)

3 A growing demographic group

Third Culture Kids are a vastly understudied group of people, yet these "prototypes of the future" are on the rise in the 21st century.

There are a number of reasons for the increasing amount of TCK's including globalisation, migration, the advances in aviation, population growth and travelling being simply trendy. These will be discussed in detail below.

3.1 Globalisation

Globalisation is an ongoing process that links people and areas including neighbourhoods, cities, regions and countries considerably closer together than ever before. (UNESCO 2010) This has led to our lives being connected with people all over the world through the food we eat, the goods we purchase, the clothes we wear, the music we listen to, the information we get and the thoughts and ideas we have.

Globalisation is economically driven by international trade, technologically driven via mass media and information technology (IT) and significantly by human means such as cultural exchanges, migration and international tourism. The process of globalisation is creating an intertwined, networked world. (UNESCO 2010.)

> *The interconnectedness amongst humans on the planet is sometimes also referred to as the 'global village' where the barriers of national and international boundaries become less relevant and the world, figuratively, a smaller place.* (UNESCO 2010)

The quote above by UNESCO introduces the term **global village**, which suggests people are so networked and connected with each other's lives all around the globe that the world could be in fact, thought of as one big village. This makes the world feel considerably smaller and within our reach, as obstacles such as both national and international boundaries become insignificant.

Globalisation is not a new process. It has been going on for thousands of years as people have been involved in trade over great distances; at times for the better, other times for the worse. The Silk Road connected China and Europe during the Middle Ages and supported trade and upheld trading ports and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade connected Africa with the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries. In addition to sending cotton, silk, indigo dye and tea

to England, the British East India Company also forced India to manufacture opium that would then be sold to China, which eventually led to the Opium Wars between Britain and China during the 19th century. Although globalisation is not a new process, it has rapidly accelerated since World War II and has many effects on people, the environment, cultures and human well-being in countries around the world. (UNESCO 2010.)

3.1.1 Information and Communication Technology

> *Advances in communication technologies and the media have intensified daily experiences of global connectedness and contributed to a "global consciousness" that normalizes and, thus, encourages more and more connectedness.* (UNESCO 2010)

In this citation by Unesco the media and communication technologies are put on the spot. Communication technologies include instant messaging, video calls, conference calls, emails, text messages, tweets, blogs, vlogs, social networking and video conferencing. These kinds of technological mediums enable people to communicate around the world. (Melendez 2019.) **Global connectedness**, or how connected we are globally with minimal effort, time and cost, encourages people to further network.

Technological advances have assisted global connectedness since the late 1800s with the telephone, answering machine, fax machine, computers and the Internet and cellular phones. Mass communications including broadcast radio and television also brought revolutionary changes. In today's world with smart phones at hand with applications such as Skype, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp users can connect and share information online within seconds. In 2000 a mere 6% of the world population had access to the Internet. In 2010 the number of people with access to the Internet had grown to cover around half of the world's population (50%). Smart phone popularity and social networking hubs have grown hand in hand. (Melendez 2019.)

According to Economics Online (2019) globalisation has increased for a number of reasons:

1. **Information and Communication Technologies** (ICT) and **transport** have accelerated the pace of globalisation during the past 30 years. The Internet has enabled fast global communication which is accessible 24/7 and **containerisation** has made it possible to ship large amounts of goods and commodities around the world at an extremely low cost.

2. The rise of **social media** has dissected national and international boundaries as sellers use new means of communication and marketing, including micro-marketing, to target consumers around the globe. Furthermore, the extensive use of **smart phones** has enabled shoppers with easy access to virtual global markets.

3. New **electronic payment methods** such as pre-pay and mobile pay, e-wallets, e-invoices and mobile pay apps also induce global trade

4. Increased **capital mobility**. Companies can freely set up shop and relocate from country to country; doing business, investing, creating jobs and making a profit abroad and then sending the profits home.

5. The **collapse of communism** has opened many former communist countries to global trade. In addition, **trade openness** has risen from 25% to around 40% for industrialised economies and from 15% to a whopping 60% for emerging economies in the past 30 years. Trade openness is the ratio of exports and imports to national income.

6. The development of **multinational and transnational companies** (MNCs and TANCs) and the significance of **global brands** such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, Sony and McDonald's ensure globalisation.

3.2 Migration

According to the International Migration Report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations (2017), worldwide migration has grown immensely in recent years. In 2017 the number of international migrants reached 258 million, which has grown from 220 million in 2010 and just 173 million in the year 2000. Over 60% of these international migrants live in Asia, accounting for 80 million, or Europe, accounting for 78 million migrants. 58 million migrants reside in North America, 25 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and 8 million in Oceania. In 2017, 2/3 of all international migrants were living in just 20 countries; the United States of America hosting the largest number of international migrants, which was 50 million.

The data above reveals that migration has increased tremendously in the past 17 years and is now a reality that touches all parts of the globe. In today's increasingly interconnected world, migration is both voluntary or involuntary. Reasons for this include the easy, cheap, trendy and fast way for people to move for work, opportunities, education and for a higher quality of life as well as conflict, poverty, inequality and the lack of sustainable livelihoods

that compel people to leave their homes and seek safety and asylum or simply just better futures for themselves and their families abroad.

During 2000-2005 the number of international migrants grew by an average of 2% per year. Between 2005 and 2010 the annual growth rate accelerated to 2,9% per year. Since then, however, that rate has slowed down to 2% growth per year during 2015-2017, which means that there is still an increasing amount of migration, albeit less than in the peak years.
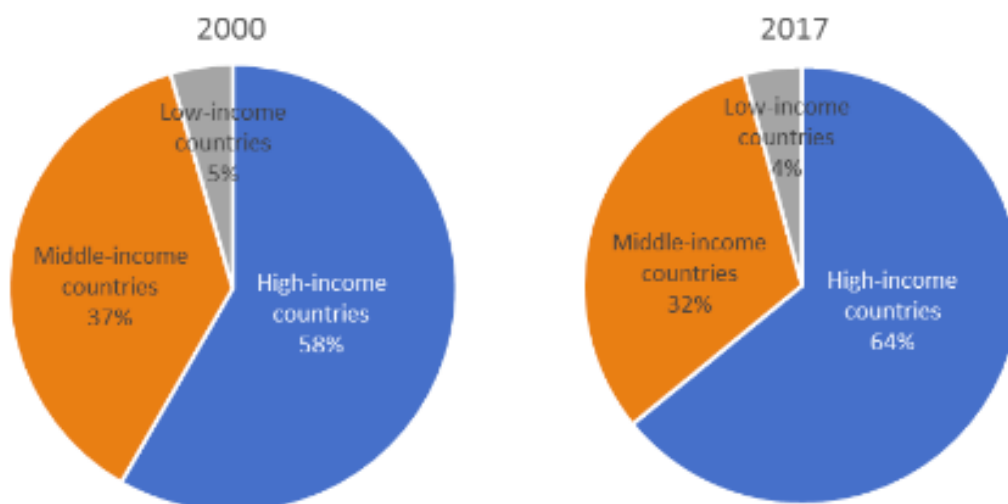

Figure 4. Percentage of international migrants by income group in 2000 and 2017 (United Nations 2017)

As seen in Figure 4. by the United Nations (2017), high-income countries house about two thirds of all of the international migrants worldwide. The income level of countries is based on the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of 2016, calculated in U.S. dollar by the World Bank. In 2017 this meant 64% of all international migrants equalling 165 million people. 36% of international migrants lived in middle- or low-income countries, more specifically 81 million in middle-income countries and 11 million in low-income countries.
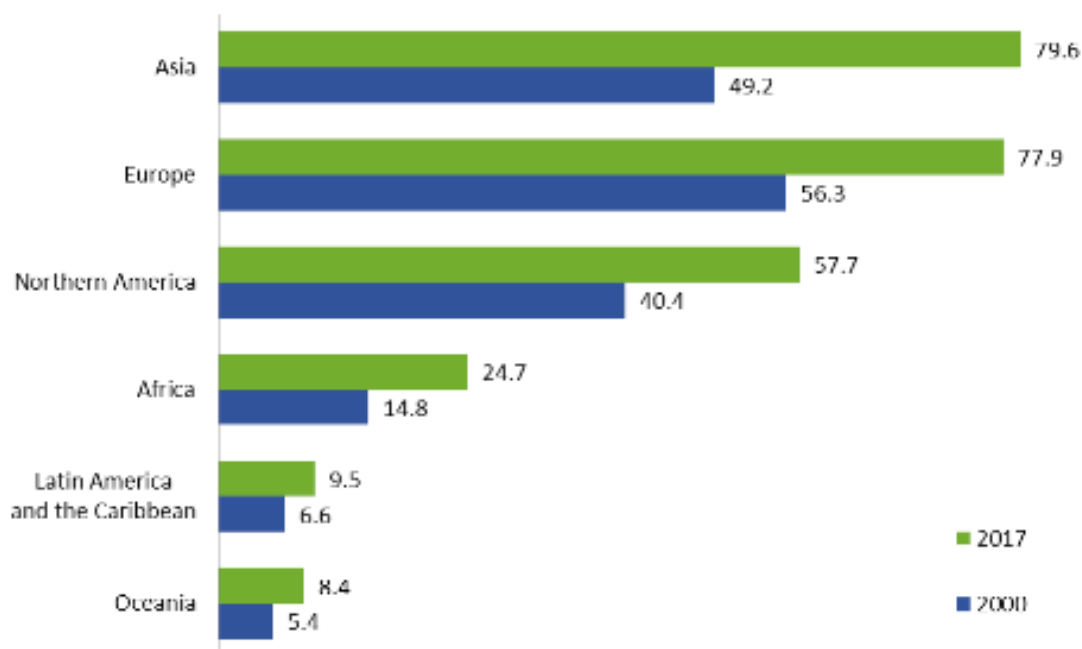
Figure 5. The number of international migrants (in millions) by region of destination (United Nations 2017)

Figure 5. provides some insights into current trends regarding migration destinations in both 2000 and 2010. Over 60% of all international migrants worldwide live in Asia or Europe. In 2017, almost 80 million migrants resided in Asia and 78 million in Europe. North America hosted the third largest number of international migrants with 58 million, followed by Africa with almost 25 million, Latin America and the Caribbean with 10 million and Oceania with 8 million migrants. Between 2000 and 2017 the number of migrants in one geographical region rose the most in Asia by 30 million, equalling around 1,8 million a year. During these 17 years also Europe grew its number of migrants by 22 million.

The number of international migrants around the world has grown faster than the world's population. Due to this speedy growth rate of migration, the share of migrants in the total population was 3,4% in 2017, up from 2,8% in 2010. (United Nations 2017.)

3.3   Aviation

Aviation and its development have profoundly changed human mobility. Travel times have sped up from months to just hours, the amount of stops and layovers along the way has decreased, air fare has become cheaper, flight and airline variation options have increased, and flying has become more accessible to the public. Journeys can be purchased instantly via the

Internet with the help of several free airline comparison sites. As an example of how vastly travelling has changed, the route from Britain to Australia will be examined in figures 6., 7., and 8., below.

Figure 6. The first flight from Brisbane to London, which lasted almost two weeks in 1935, included 31 stops on four continents and one train ride (Leadbeater 2018)

Figure 7. In 1947 the route from Sydney to London lasted four days including 6 stops in four continents, with overnight stays in Singapore and Cairo (Leadbeater 2018)

Figure 8. In 2018 the direct flight from Perth to London lasted a mere 17 hours (Leadbeater 2018)

The price of air travel has also notably decreased. In 1935 flying was a new and expensive way to travel, the journey from Brisbane to London costing around £166. Converting this into present financial terms it is the equivalent of around £10,834 or 12,600€. In 1947 the journey that had previously lasted almost two weeks now lasted 4 days and cost £585, which, when adjusted for inflation, equates to around £21,000 or 24,430€. It was about 32,5 months' worth of wages at the time. (Leadbeater 2018.) Present-day tickets from London to Perth cost a measly £380 or 443€ (Momondo 2019) and are attainable for Western people from just one months' salary.

These advancements in information and communication technology have made it easier and faster to independently search, compare and book flights on the Internet with the conveniences of our smart devices compared to the time, money and effort it took to use travel agencies. Furthermore, the developments in aviation have made air travel accessible to the public, fast and affordable which then translates into increased mobility and supports the growth of Third Culture Kids, as people travel more and it is a possible option to set up life in different countries.

3.4   Population growth

200 years ago, there were less than 1 billion people living on earth (Kremer 1993). Today there are over 7 billion, according to UN calculations. For thousands of years the population growth was slow and steady but recently, in the past few centuries, population growth has rapidly accelerated. Between 1900 and 2000 the increase in world population was three times greater than ever before in human history – the world population grew from 1.5 to 6.1 billion in just 100 years. (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2017)

As seen in Figure 9., the world population has been on the rise since 1750. At first, the growth is moderate but booms in the 20th century. Observing the world population line, it is clear the population is still extensively growing, and the projection is to accommodate an unforeseen 11.2 billion people on this planet in less than 100 years' time. However, following the annual growth rate line it is visible that the annual growth rate of the world population peaks at a record high positive 2,1% in 1962 and has since then almost halved. In the projection as well, the annual growth rate is going down. This means that the world population is still growing, but it is doing so at a much slower pace than before.
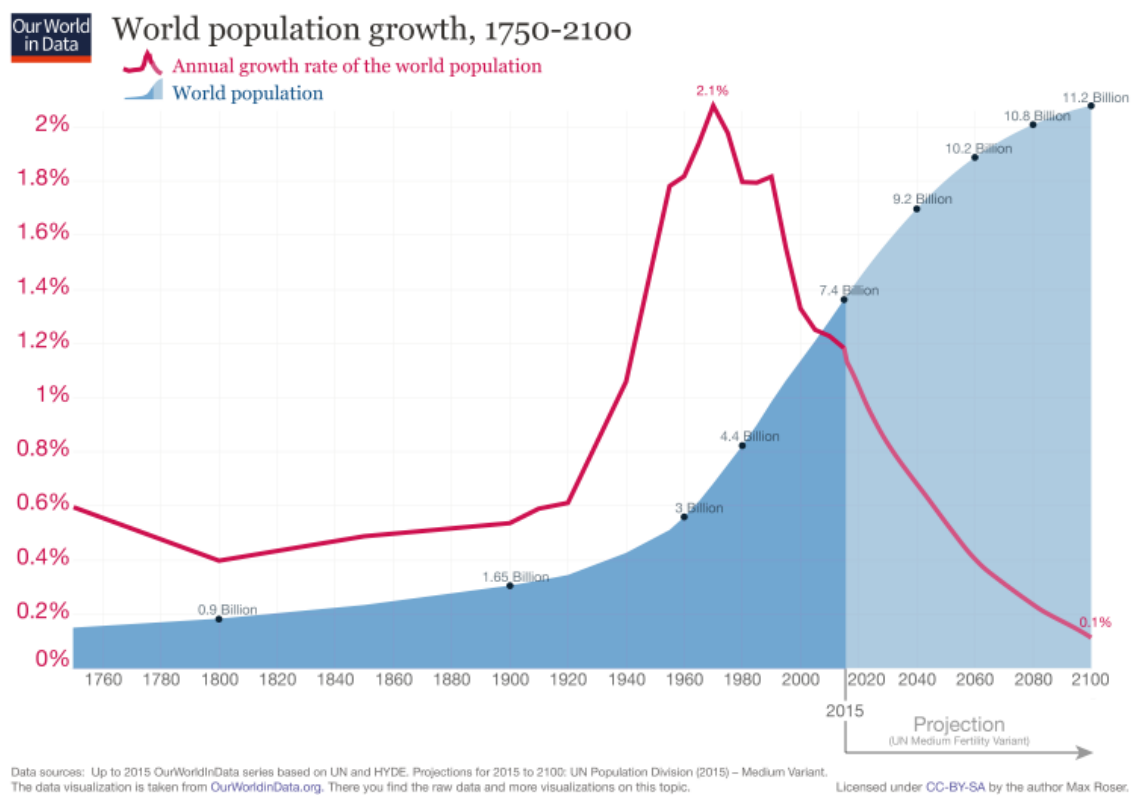

Figure 9. The world population growth 1750 – 2015, with a projection to 2100 (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2017)

Time for global population to increase by one billion

The number of years taken for the global population to increase by one billion. Also shown are the years over which this billion was added. Figures from 7 billion onwards are based on the UN's medium projection to 2100.
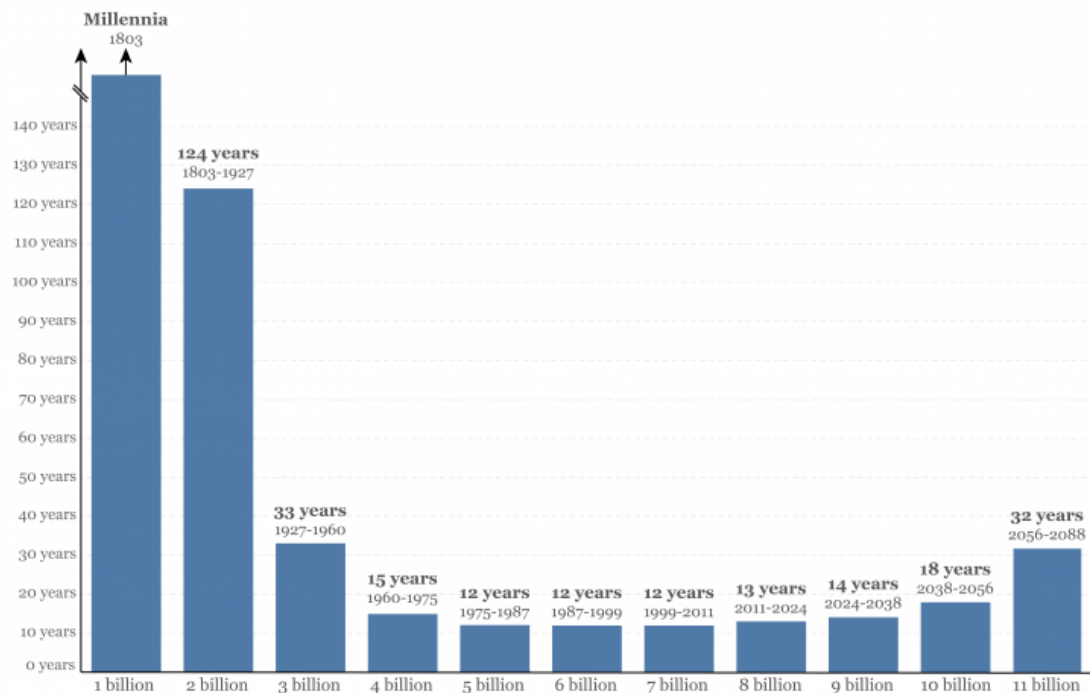
Figure 10. How many years does it take for the global population grow by one billion people (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina 2017)

As the population grows so does the number of Third Culture Kids. This is because there are certain trades that require travelling and while parents move abroad for work, children follow the parents and may end up growing and experiencing their crucial years in a culture which is neither of their parents' or their birth/passport/home country. According to TCKidNOW (2019a), parents' careers that often lead to their children becoming TCK's include:

1. **Military.** "Army brats", as they are called, are primarily from the United States of America and generally spend only a few years abroad. Approximately 41% of army brats spend less than 5 years in a foreign country. They are the least likely TCKs to develop connections with the locals, because military bases aim for self-sufficiency and thus the kids tend not to mix with the local culture. They often live in or near military bases.

2. **Government/Diplomacy.** Non-military government TCKs are the most likely to experience foreign countries for extended periods. 44% have lived in at least four countries and an equal 44% have spent at least 10 years outside of their passport country. It depends greatly on the job and actions of the parents' how involved the children are with locals. Many grow up moving from country to country in the diplomatic corps

staying in local reserves with security men at gates, chauffeurs and housekeepers, which may deeply vary from local living.

3. **Religious**. "Missionary kids" typically spend the most time overseas in one country. 85% of missionary kids spend over 10 years in foreign countries. This group of children generally have the most interaction with the local population, hence are the most likely to integrate to the local culture. They also have the least interaction with people from their passport country.

4. **Business**. Families whose parents do business abroad spend a great deal of time in foreign countries. 63% of "business TCKs" have spent at least 10 years in foreign countries and are more likely to live in multiple countries than missionary kids. They tend to have plenty interaction with both their host nationals and with others from their passport country.

5. **Other**. This category covers all who do not fit in the beforementioned descriptions. They include educators, intergovernmental agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media, those who have adopted a travelling lifestyle and so forth. These children typically spend the least amount of time abroad; 42% are in foreign countries for 1-2 years and 70% for less than 5 years. Their parents, however, are the most likely to have advanced degrees with a percentage of 89%.

3.5   Travelling as a trend

Due to the abovementioned reasons of globalisation and the development of aviation and how it is in layman's reach, travelling has become a hobby and a lifestyle in the 21st century. It is no longer considered a luxury, but rather a necessity, right and source of pride. Social media has played a great deal in this development.

The hashtag #travel has over 380 million linked photos in American social media platform Instagram. Instagram has grown ever since it was created in 2010 and in the past few years faster than ever: in 2016 Instagram announced it has 500 million Instagrammers, out of which over 300 million use Instagram daily. The community has also vastly expanded out of the United States, as more than 80% are living elsewhere (Instagram Press 2016). Less than one year later they declared 700 million users (Instagram Press 2017). As of today, Instagram is one of the biggest social media networks with over 1 billion active monthly users, according to Carman (2018), many of whom use it as a travel guide and come to it for tips. Travelling

has become such a trendy pastime that just 10 of the most popular travel influencers on Instagram have a reach of over 17 Million people. (Street 2017).

How does travelling relate to Third Culture Kids? The popularity of travelling indicates the number of Third Culture Kids will also increase, as people from a very young age travel for leisure, study abroad, seek work opportunities overseas, do internships and placements in exotic destinations, go on month-long retreats, backpack around the globe, interrail and so on. It is often love, work, education or one's hobbies and passions that lead one to stay for longer periods of time, during which one may also start a family or relocate their family with them. As these children are then living in a country that is not one or both of their parents' home country, Third Culture Children are born.

4   Multiculturalism in the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care

Early childhood education in Finland is subsidized by the government and regulated by the Finnish National Agency of Education. For preparing local curricula for early childhood education and care, a national regulation is used as a basis. This is the 'National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care', a guide booklet for both public and private kindergartens, if you will. Its purpose is to help the staff plan, implement and develop early childhood education in addition to promote equal and high-quality care throughout Finland.

The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2017) states that "cultural diversity is perceived as a resource". It is each child's fundamental right to have their own language, culture, religion and worldview. For this to be possible, all staff members *must* be knowledgeable of different cultures and worldviews and have the ability to see things from various perspectives. They must also be able to put themselves in another's shoes. The Core Curriculum advises the staff and children to discuss different ways of thinking and acting and coming up with new ways together.

The different kinds of cultural and linguistic backgrounds children have in early childhood education and care, ECEC in short, enrich the community. In addition, languages, cultures and worldviews are integrated to be a part of all activities. (National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2017).

Specifically, multilingualism is also mentioned in the National Core Curriculum; "Making multilingualism visible supports children's development in a culturally diverse world" (The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2017). The quote indicates a culturally diverse world is recognised in the Finnish education system and signifies that incorporating multilingualism in ECEC supports the development of a child. To develop a child's linguistic identity, aspects of both linguistic and cultural diversity is brought into the curriculum in cooperation with parents. Further, it is mentioned that the language skills, linguistic identities, cultural identities and self-esteem of foreign language speaking and multilingual children are supported in ECEC. The National Core Curriculum continues that the staff encourages children to use language in a diverse manner.

5   Methodology

The following chapter will define how this study was conducted and why. The aim of the thesis and research question will be answered, and the data collection and details of the chosen method will be described. The results will be reviewed and then analyzed. Issues such as the reliability, validity, generalizability and ethics of the study will be discussed. Lastly, limitations of the study will be addressed.

5.1   Aim and research question

The aim of the thesis is to find a clear answer to the research question. As the knowledge of Third Culture Kids is still scarce and the support non-existent, this thesis aims to answer the question 'is there a need to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?'. With the world, and early childhood education groups alongside it, becoming more international day by day, it is important to study new phenomenon such as the emerging demographic group of Third Culture Kids. Yet their struggles and the effect of lacking support is not publicly discussed. Or is this even an issue? Do TCKs themselves feel the need for support? This study will find out is it important to support TCKs in early childhood education.

5.2   Survey

To find an answer to the question 'Should we support Third Culture Kids?', an empirical study serves best. While a quantitative approach may be beneficial for both measuring variables and data analysis for topics such as the mean income of kindergarten teachers, the success rate of operations in hospitals, the time it takes for a student to graduate or global alcohol consumption, a qualitative approach recognizes that numbers do not always tell the whole story or pave the way for empirical understanding. Ruane (2016) explains that qualitative research is a way to document a reality that relies not on numbers but on words. When studying the **importance** of supporting Third Culture Kids, it is beneficial to hear them out directly, listening to their words, their worded feelings and thoughts. Thus, an empirical manner which describes a phenomenon and highlights associations is the most targeting methodological choice for this study. This way, we can gain insights to their experiences.

Punch (2003) brings focus to sampling in his book Survey Research: The Basics. He asks 'What would be the ideal sample for this study?' When asking is it important to support Third Culture Kids, it is best to go directly to the source; the experts on the topic, Third Culture Kids themselves. Only they know how a TCK background feels like, what could help and what they need. It is counter-productive to reach out to the general public, educators including teachers and kindergarten directors or even psychologists, as they have little knowledge on this little-known topic. Third Culture Kids can provide the sought-after answers on a silver platter.

Ruane (2016) points out that in social sciences the most prominent data collection tool is the survey, in which data is collected by asking questions. Questions can be asked via an interview or a questionnaire. In addition to posing questions to respondents a survey also includes the delivery of the questionnaire and the analysis of the responses, as stated in the popular survey creating tool SurveyMonkey (2019). As this study aims to hear Third Culture Kids' own personal experiences, thoughts and opinions, the survey was chosen to be the research method, including a questionnaire to be filled out by Third Culture Kids.

After a short comparison of online survey creating websites SurveyMonkey and SurveyHero, the latter was chosen to be used. This is due to the fact that it is free, relatively fast to learn and sounds more professional than 'SurveyMonkey'. Specifically, the word 'hero' insinuates a more respectable study than 'monkey'. As Ruane (2016) states in Introducing Social Research Methods, "we must choose our words wisely". Something so simple as wording can affect the answering rate, the drop-out rate and the answers received.

"Good surveys start with a good sales pitch" (Ruane 2016). In order for respondents to feel willing to participate, the questionnaire must first sell itself. A cover letter is the first thing respondents see, well before the opening question. The cover letter should convey that this survey is a trustworthy one and their participation is valued. This was taken into consideration and a persuasive cover letter was written (see Appendix 1), in which the topic and length of the questionnaire was addressed. It was also mentioned that participation is voluntary and anonymous. As advised, names and email addresses were enclosed where to seek additional information if wanted.

The questionnaire was worded to be as short and precise as possible. SurveyHero (2019) mentions that often as the amount of questions increases, the completion rate decreases. As the mean time respondents use to fill in a questionnaire is 10 minutes, regardless of its length, it was made sure to include only the essentials.

The questionnaire includes 16 questions (or 14, if answered 'No' on two counts), out of which 10 are closed and 6 are open-ended questions. The questionnaire is visible in Appendix 2.

5.3   Data collection

Thousands of Third Culture Kids are reaching out to each other on social media site Facebook, trying to learn more about their unique background and find comfort in the safety of others alike. To collaborate with these TCKs, appropriate Facebook groups and pages such as Third Culture Kids (TCKs), Third Culture Kids Everywhere, TCKid: A Home for Third Culture Kids, Third Culture Kid and Cross Cultural Kids Everywhere were joined, in hopes of sharing the survey with them. The groups with their corresponding number of members are shown below in Table 2.

Facebook group	Number of members
Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	16,566
Third Culture Kids Everywhere	5,590
TCKid: A Home for Third Culture Kids	4,813
Third Culture Kid	522
Cross Cultural Kids Everywhere	27,190

Table 2. TCK-related Facebook pages joined with corresponding number of members, in hopes of gaining survey respondents

After joining these groups, it was thought to have access to 10,968,756 people with a Third Culture Kid background. The survey was posted to all of the front pages or "walls" of the pages along with a message stating who is the researcher, from what school, why is this being studied, what kind of a survey this is and why is it being posted in the group. The message was descriptive, short and inviting. However, after 24 hours and zero responses, the pages were looked at further. The survey wasn't found on any of the groups' walls. It was found out that on the page Third Culture Kids (TCKs) only the administrator posts on the wall and all other member activity is behind the 'Community' tab. Yet the survey and message were not there either, because all surveys are banned in the group. There is a research block in all the other TCK-related groups as well. Because these Third Culture Kids from around the world all in one same Facebook page were found to be the best option at the time for the survey, the administrators of the page TCKid: A Home for Third Culture Kids were reached out to. They explained they are working on the page and in the future will incorporate a research

platform, possibly being in testing stage in a few months. As time is of essence and there was none to spare the data collection options were rethought.

As the writer of this thesis is a Third Culture Kid herself and having gone to international schools in elementary and secondary school in addition to two international degree programmes in universities of applied sciences, it was realized the writer herself has a vast social circle of TCKs. For these reasons the survey was posted on her own Facebook page along with a more personal and funnier message than previously in the TCK groups, explaining the situation, what kind of help is needed and from whom. Again, no responses were received. Some surely opened the survey just to have a look without answering any questions and two started to answer but stopped once they got past the first two general age & gender questions and got to the TCK-related ones (it is suspected that they noticed they were not the target group of this questionnaire).
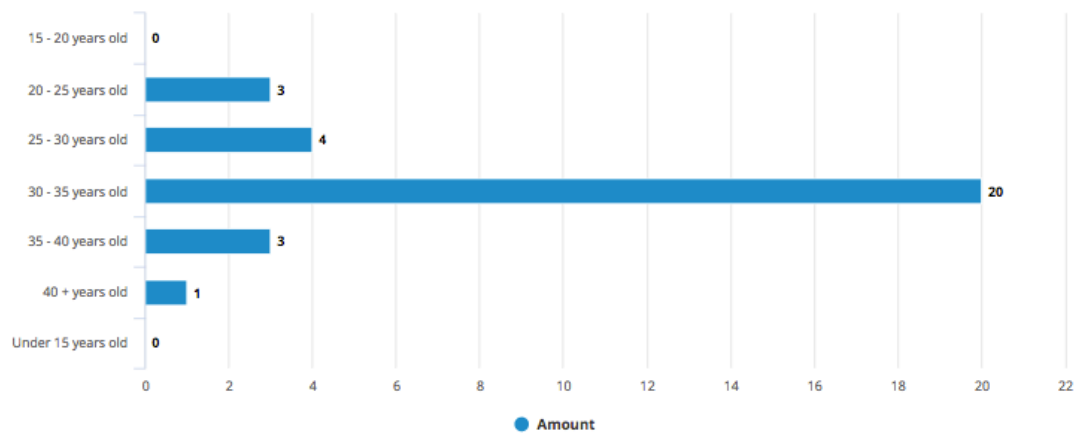
Finally, to receive answers from actual Third Culture Kids the survey was sent to 34 TCKs directly, or if they were siblings or from the same class they were sent a private group message. These people are ones that the writer knows for sure to have grown up abroad in cultures different to their parents'. These messages were on the most personal and informal level, still informing about the anonymity. The response rate improved significantly and were of a level that could be generalized.

Data was collected within one week, from the 6th of April to the 12th of April 2019. The survey received 83 views and 31 total responses. The completion rate was 77,4%, as some started but did not finish the questionnaire and the participation rate was 37,3% as a total of 52 people simply opened and viewed the questionnaire but did not answer. The average completion time was 12 minutes 19 seconds.

Out of the 31 respondents 3 people were 20-25 years old, 4 people were 25-30 years old, 20 people, the clear majority, were 30-35 years of age, 3 people were 35-40 years old and only one was 40 years old or more. Eight of the respondents (25,81%) were male and 23 (74,19%) were female (Figure 11).

Age

Number of responses: 31

15 - 20 years old	0
20 - 25 years old	3
25 - 30 years old	4
30 - 35 years old	20
35 - 40 years old	3
40 + years old	1
Under 15 years old	0

● Amount

Gender

Number of responses: 31

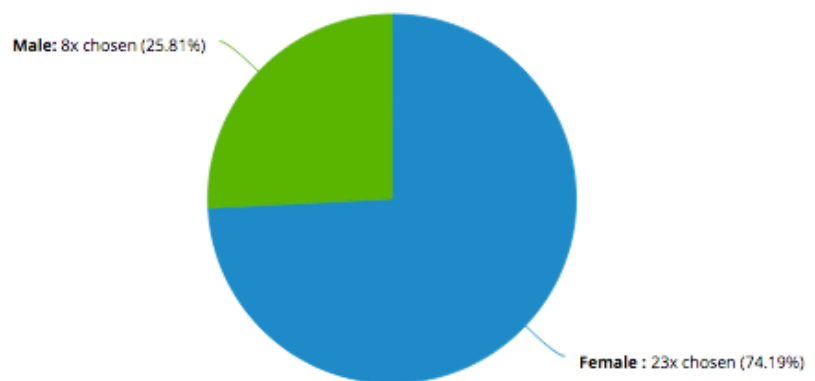Male: 8x chosen (25.81%)

Female : 23x chosen (74.19%)

Figure 11. Age and gender statistics of the TCKs who answered the questionnaire.

5.4   Results

The questionnaire reveals that out of 30 Third Culture Kids, 22 (73%) did not receive any support regarding their TCK childhood when they were under 7 years old. 8 people (27%) did receive support, mainly from parents (6 answers) and their kindergarten/preschool/school (4 answers) but also from their peers (3 answers), Saturday School (2 answers), "home country" community (1 answer) and other (1 answer), as seen below in Figure 12.

When you were under 7 years old, did you receive any support regarding your Third Culture Kid (TCK) childhood?

Number of responses: 30

Yes: 8x chosen (26.67%)

No: 22x chosen (73.33%)
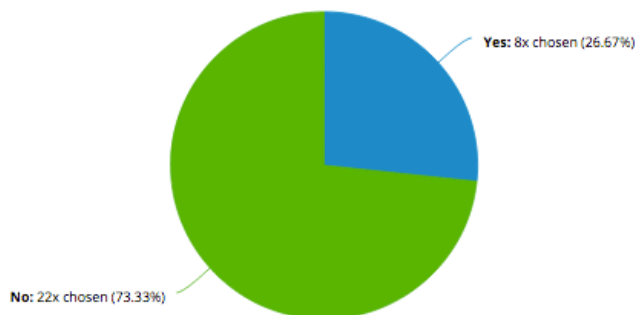
If yes, where did you receive support from?

Number of responses: 9

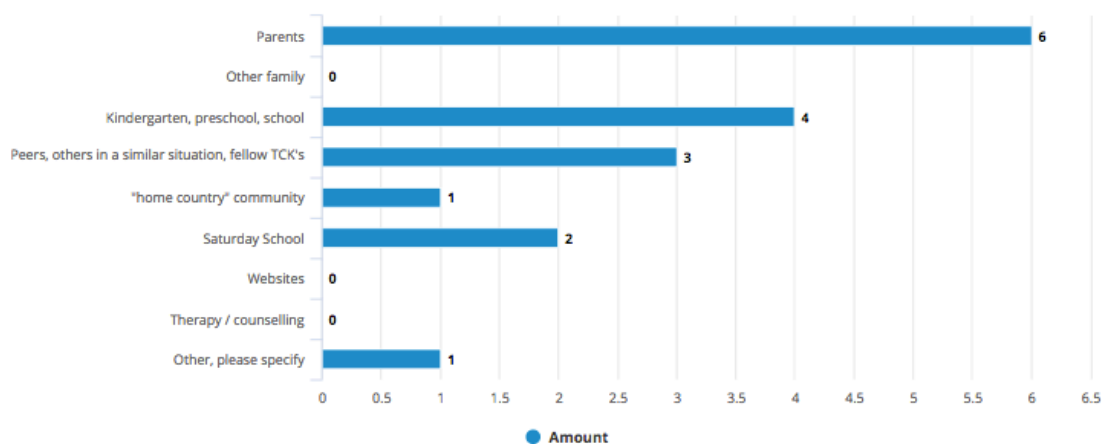|	Amount
Parents	6
Other family	0
Kindergarten, preschool, school	4
Peers, others in a similar situation, fellow TCK's	3
"home country" community	1
Saturday School	2
Websites	0
Therapy / counselling	0
Other, please specify	1

Figure 12. 73% of all respondents did not receive any support regarding their TCK background when they were under 7 years old. 27% did receive support, mainly from their parents and kindergarten/preschool/school (SurveyHero 2019)

"I started school in 2nd grade rather than 1st as the country we moved to started earlier. I had a very supportive teacher that spent a lot of class time with me to ensure I caught up to the level of the other kids in my class."

"We had a Finnish language teachers specifically funded for by my parents' employer to give my siblings and I cultural and language education in our native tongue so it wouldn't [wither] away."

"We had "saturday school" ie. Finnish school to keep up with the language and to connect with other Finns living abroad."

To answer the question "Would you of needed support at the time (when you were under 7 years old)?" 52% of the respondents answered 'No' and 48% answered 'Yes' (Figure 13.)

Would you of needed support at the time (when you were under 7 years old)?

Number of responses: 25

Figure 13. 13 respondents or 52% answered they would have needed support when they were under 7 years old and 12 respondents or 48% answered they would not have needed support (SurveyHero 2019)

Some of the reasons for answering 'Yes' include:

> "I guess I never realized I was different until people would point it to me and I didn't understand it properly, but I knew it didn't feel good when people made comments on the way I look and that it was different from the norm. It would have been nice if adults would have stepped in, but they probably thought it was normal since I did look different."

> "It felt that people around don't understand me and there was a gap in the communication with others without the same cultural experience."

> "I was blind and deaf because I [didn't] understand [the] language I was in."

And some of the reasons for answering 'No' include:

> "Help with what? When I was under 7, I thought my life was completely normal; i.e., I thought it was normal for people to move around from place to place."

"What was important to my development at the time was to have a good home and a supportive family. At that age friends come and go and children play and grow in a similar manner no matter what country you live in."

"When you are small it is exciting to be abroad :-)"

If you would have received support during childhood (under 7 years old), do you think it would have benefited your later life?

Number of responses: 25

No: 8x chosen (32.00%)
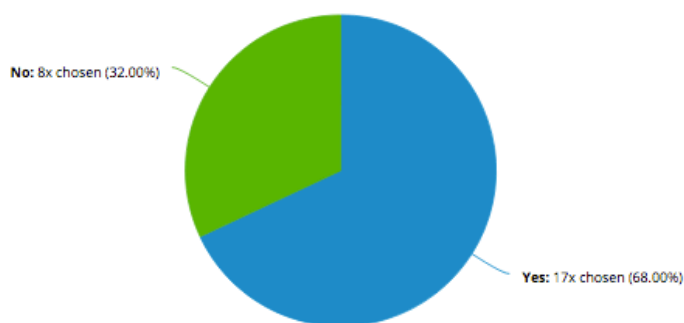
Yes: 17x chosen (68.00%)

Figure 14. 68% of TCKs think support during their childhood would have benefited their later life (SurveyHero 2019)

To the question "If you would have received support during your childhood (under 7 years old), do you think it would have benefited your later life?" 68% of TCKs answered 'Yes' and 32% answered 'No' as depicted in Figure 14. above. Some justifications for these answers include:

"It took many years after moving back to my home country to really feel at home and connected to society. I think if the issue was discussed this would have happened faster."

"I did not realize how different my life was and how different I looked from the rest of the country until I reached my teenage years. Before then it all seemed equal. It is only once someone points out that you are different that you start to feel different. I went to a diverse school so there everyone was different but equal. But outside of school you noticed that you are the outcast."

"For a kid it might not be easy to understand why he/she is different from the majority population. Language education is something I feel I would've needed more of."

"Yea it probably would have helped with my issues of [self-esteem] and confidence regarding the way I look and my general feelings of identity."

"Because of in globalization, human mobility etc I think children in general benefit from an environment where they are taught about multiculturalism, having multiple homes and the richness of various cultures. I think this is an inevitable direction of the contemporary world. I just happen to experience it myself earlier. I cannot say for sure that specific support would have benefited me in any way."

"Especially growing up in a home/community that turned all outcries for reasons to pray harder towards "God" led me to a place I find it hard to trust people helping one another"

"Adult guidance and maturity helps piece the parts into a cohesive whole and validate and give words to feelings"

"There are so many things involved that can't be even described.. one thing that has affected me a lot ([though] i was older than 7 years old at the time) was that I learned to read and write in a Spanish first and when I was 9 years old we moved to Finland. At that time my teachers didn't know why I didn't understand what was I reading when I was reading Finnish (because of the pronunciation which is different in different cultures). So I had to stay in "jälki-istunto" every week because nobody understood why I couldn't read Finnish."

"Managing expectations of a massively different climate would have helped beforehand."

Have you struggled later on in life due to your TCK background?

Number of responses: 24

No: 3x chosen (12.50%)
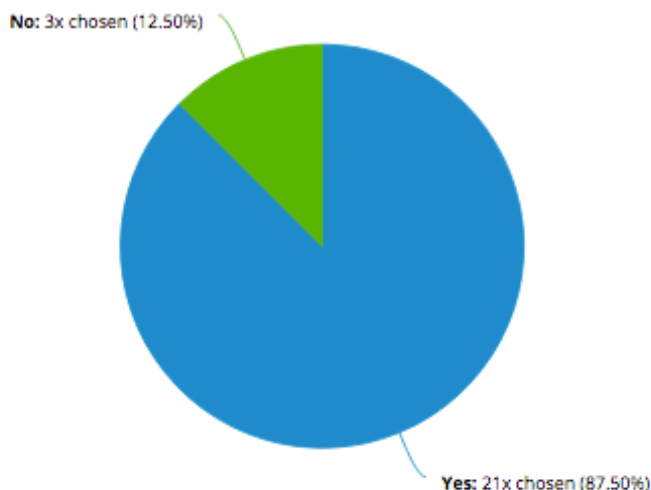
Yes: 21x chosen (87.50%)

Figure 15. 87,5% of TCKs have struggled later on in life due to their TCK background (Sur-veyHero 2019)

As seen in Figure 15., 87,5% of the respondents admitted to having struggled later on in life due to their TCK background, while 12,5% answered they have not struggled. Some of the experienced difficulties include:

> "Fitting into a group was and is still an issue? When you are young people expected you live as a local and parents hope that you keep your culture and religion."

> "I had a major culture shock when I moved back."

> "I always get asked where I am from. I tend to develop friendships that are short-term because I get too scared about attachment. I have always had to leave my friendships."

> "I still don't fit in. I want out. All these new age hipsters pretending to be all global with their social media profiles promoting themselves through pictures taken abroad. What do they know? They'll never know what it was to have actual international friends in an international setting - how all of that changes you deeply."

> "You have to be better than anybody else[,] then people will see you as equal"

"Finding a home, settling down, feeling out of place."

"Sometimes it feels like I don't belong and at times I do think that the grass is greener somewhere else even though I know it's not the case."

"No one believes where I'm from and everyone always wants to ask the same damn questions every time. It's just dull but I guess there's no way out when you look exotic"

"I feel no sense of belonging and a constant yearning to find a place in the world where I belong. Moving away is always an itch I feel that I need to scratch. I feel a lack of safety because the country I lived in was unsafe and that has stuck as well. It took me years to realize that home is where I make my home and where my heart is. So for me home is where my friends and spouse are."

"Feeling out of place. People ask me almost every week if I speak Finnish or they start talking to me in English or something like that.. it feels quite bad when you are in your 'home country' (what's that?! :))"

"I still feel rootless."

"I answered "no" but I feel the need to comment regardless: I joined an international school back in Finland, which meant that I was a returning expat who was able to encircle his/herself with people from similar backgrounds. If I would've entered a regular public school, I believe I would have struggled because of my TKC background."

"Probably not as my high school had a lot of people like me so it felt normal for me."

"I guess I never really felt like I belong culturally, the way [I] look and language wise. I have accepted that I don't really have a mother tongue or really relate 100-% to any cultures but that's ok."

Do you think it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?

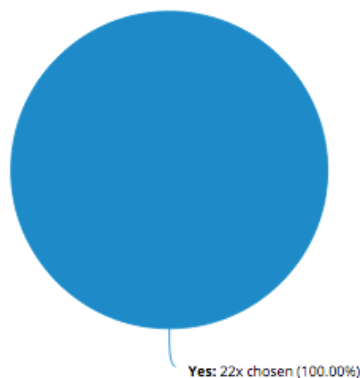Number of responses: 22

Yes: 22x chosen (100.00%)

Figure 16. 100% of the respondents think it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care (SurveyHero 2019)

As depicted in Figure 16., 100% of the respondents answered they think it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care, for the following reasons:

"Because of the [identity]"

"Roots. You become dysfunctional without them."

"Would help to make us feel more normal"

"I think it's really important for children to appreciate their uniqueness and understand that everyone does not grow up with one language or one ethnicity and we should teach children to value their differences rather than pointing them out as something bad or ignoring it."

"Both cultures (one's own and the local majority) should be embraced, in my opinion. Usually one's own cultural and linguistic education is the one that gets left behind if there is no group-specific services for TCK's. However, I think I had it the easy way around: being a westerner in a non-western country meant that we had our livelihood, insurances, vacations, extracurricular activities etc. thought of and paid for."

"Language and grammar support."

"I think it's important to honestly explain to children what's going on and make them feel that they are somewhat part of decision making in families that move many times, especially those who move from one country to another."

"Kids have it tough and those with no cornerstone or good foundation will struggle even more."

"Maybe if the child is supported and told from an early age that they might feel different [than] others and that's ok- it might come as less of a shock when they realize it."

"Telling them the problems are going to be OK. And there are help if they need it. They are not alone."

5.5   Content analysis

Looking at the open-ended questions and specifically at the words the respondents chose to use some patterns arise. By counting how many times certain words were used in the answers produced by the respondents the qualitative data can be turned into quantitative data.

To the question 'Would you of needed support at the time (when you were under 7 years old)?' the three most popular themes in respondents' answers were about **language**, **being normal** and **appearance**. The words "language", "native tongue", "spoken languages", "language skills", "English", "communicating", "communication", "understand" and "comprehend" were mentioned 13 times in total. The words "normal", "norm", "norms" and "similar manner" were mentioned 9 times. The words "looking mainstream", "the way I look", "look different" and "stand out" all relate to one's appearance and these were mentioned 6 times.

From this it is understood that when a child is young, under 7 years old, the most important things in their life, especially in a life where they are living and growing up in a foreign culture, have to do with language and being understood as well as understanding others and their surroundings, being normal, and their appearance, meaning how they look compared to others.

When children grow older, however, the important topics in their lives seem to shift from language, being normal and appearances to other issues such as the **sense of belonging**, **home** and **friendships**. This is discovered from the respondents' answers to the question 'Have you struggled later on in life due to your TCK background?'. The words "fitting in", "fit in", "feeling out of place", "belong" and "rootless", "similar background" and "member of society" were used a total of 27 times. The words "finding a home", "settling down", "moving",

"moving away" and "grass is greener" came up 13 times. "Friendship", "friends", "encircle his/herself with people", "find a group" and "spouse" was mentioned 9 times. Table 3. below exhibits how these underlying issues were found from the questionnaire answers.

Question	Reoccurring words	Popular themes	Underlying issue
Would you of needed support at the time (when you were under 7 years old)?	language, native tongue, spoken languages, language skills, English, communicating, communication, understand, comprehend	Language	Blending in
	normal, norm, norms, similar manner	Being normal	
	looking mainstream, the way I look, look different, stand out	Appearance	
Have you struggled later on in life due to your TCK background?	fitting in, fit in, feeling out of place, belong, rootless, similar background, member of society	Sense of belonging	Roots
	finding a home, settling down, moving, moving away, grass is greener	Home	
	friendships, friends, encircle his/herself with people, find a group, spouse	Relationships	

Table 3. Finding the underlying issues from the respondents' answers

As seen in the table above, when children are young (under the age of 7), **blending in** is the most frequently occurring topic on mind. Many TCK's answered they did not like it when someone comments on their appearance; even when it is a compliment, and someone calls them beautiful, it can make one feel uncomfortable if it points out how different or "exotic" they are. Children didn't like to stand out and felt *more* comfortable in an international environment, where they blend in as everyone looks different to one another. Language was also a major factor as many struggled with having multiple languages. What makes it difficult is that the school environment may not understand the child speaks another language or has a different mother tongue and, in some cases, punished the child for not acting accordingly. Children want to feel understood and understand their surroundings themselves. Everything is more difficult with a language barrier. More than anything, children under want to feel "normal" and that they fit in. Nobody wants to be an outsider.

As TCKs grow older the issues they deal with change. Now their main topic seems to be with their **roots** or their rootedness; how rooted they are. They struggle with the feeling of belonging somewhere and being a member of a group and society. They want to feel they have a home somewhere, but many are still in search of said place they feel at home. Some feel the urge to move abroad again and others have indeed moved and noticed they do not feel at home abroad either, whether that be a totally new country or the country they spent their formative years growing up in. Many TCKs have realized their home is not tied to a geographical place but rather to a feeling or people; family and friends.

5.6   Reliability, Validity, Generalisability

Why is this study and thesis trustworthy? The reliability is derived from the chosen research method. Should a literature review have been conducted, for example, few articles would have been stumbled upon and even fewer that serve my purpose: to find out should we be supporting Third Culture Kids from a very young age, and is that important? Why is it important? It would have been very difficult to conduct in the first place and most probably led to poor results. By conducting a survey, the questions were brought directly to the source - to TCKs themselves. They have the answers and only their expertise is valid.

It turned out to be a blessing in disguise to at first not get answers through the TCK groups or the writer's own Facebook page as with these it cannot be controlled who answers. Even though assumedly everyone is a Third Culture Kid who is in Facebook's TCK groups or only the TCKs of the writer's friends answer the survey, one can never truly know. Some may be there for research or out of pure interest. Perhaps the non-TCK friends just wanted to see what

kind of a survey was conducted. And assuredly this happened, as 58 people merely opened and viewed the questionnaire and 7 people started but did not finish it. In the end, the answers of the survey were from those whom it is known to have a TCK background and were personally invited to participate.

Plagiarism was avoided at all costs as that would not only shatter the credibility of this study but also result in losing face as a student and thesis writer and kill the writer's spirit as a human being. Plagiarism would also bring shame to Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Paraphrasing has been used when repeating another's words and quotations have been used giving credit to the right source.

Generalizability was considered before the survey was conducted, in the planning stage. When deciding whether to conduct face-to-face interviews with TCKs or to send an online questionnaire, it was the scope of respondents and the issue of generalizability why an online questionnaire was chosen. As Ruane (2016) states, although an interview is the more *personal* form of survey research, speaking with the respondent face-to-face, on the telephone or via Skype, a questionnaire can transcend most barriers of time and space: meaning respondents can answer at any time and in any place suitable for them – undoubtedly positively affecting the number of respondents. Due to the writer's physical location at the time of writing and the busy timetables of everyone's lives, a questionnaire that reaches more people and in different countries is more generalizable than a handful of interviews that would have been able to conduct in close proximity.

With 31 participants who answered the questionnaire I would not go as far as saying this is a great scope of responders. However, knowing that they are all legitimate TCK's from around the world with very different backgrounds, yet the answers are fairly coherent, I would say this is a trustworthy study and generalizable to a larger number of TCKs. To the question 'Do you think it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?' 100% of the respondents answered 'Yes' and this is a clear unanimous answer to my research question.

5.7   Ethical issues

The importance of ethics is undeniable in research. If we can't trust science, what can we trust? All new pieces of information and data is valuable rendering it pointless to only present "positive" results. In science facts matter, be they positive, negative or neutral. For this reason, the results were not altered or selected in any way - all were presented truthfully. Even

difficulties and setbacks are discussed as they are an equal part of the study. Research ethics consist of more than just the obvious, falsifying data. Ruane (2016) mentions following proper procedures, safeguarding the wellbeing of the research subjects, receiving informed consent of said subjects and protecting their privacy. These were taken into consideration in the cover letter (Appendix 1.) that participants read before proceeding to the questionnaire. The participants were informed that answering the questionnaire is voluntary and all responses are anonymous. The informed consent to use the anonymous responses in the thesis was acquired from everyone who took part in the survey. The language in the questionnaire was neutral, not implying anything positive nor negative of Third Culture Kids, as not to offend anyone.

While addressing ethical issues it is noteworthy to mention no participant was paid, forced, bribed or threatened to answer, neither was it implied a certain type of answer was sought after. On the contrary, it was emphasized there are no right or wrong answers, hearing respondents' thoughts and opinions is what is valued.

5.8   Research limitations

Price and Muman (2004) mention that limitations of a study include issues that may have had an influence on one's research findings. Such issues could be one's sample size, lack of available or reliable data, the lack of prior research on the topic or the method used to collect data. Limitations could also be more researcher-tied, such as access to the right information or people, time available, biases or linguistic skills, if information is presented in a foreign language.

In this thesis it is recognized that the wording in the first question (after the age and gender) in the questionnaire was not the best. The question "When you were under 7 years old, were you living (/had you lived) in a country other than your passport country?" confused many respondents and personal direct messages were received enquiring can they even answer the questionnaire. Many suspected they are not in the target group as they had moved abroad, away from their "home country" after the age of 7. The confusion may have also led to participants not answering all the questions, as they believed they cannot. It is recognized that people who have spent their formative years outside their parents' culture(s) are Third Culture Kids, but this does not necessary only mean those under 7 years. The writer of this thesis was personally hung up on the age of 7 because that is when children cross over to elementary school from early childhood education and care (kindergarten and preschool) in Finland.

As the writer is specializing to become a kindergarten teacher, it is possible too much emphasis was put on this age.

Another issue to ponder is that even though the answers were fairly consistent, and could thus be considered valid and generalizable, are 31 respondents enough for a reliable survey? Could their similar answers be a coincidence, and other TCKs around the world answer differently?

It is suggested that in future research the questions would be designed to leave no space for misunderstandings. Every question should have a clear purpose and a clear meaning. More thought should be put on wording. It would also be beneficial to have a larger scope of respondents, to see does that have any effect on the answers.

6   Discussion

The results of the questionnaire express the hidden struggles of Third Culture Kids and reveal the importance of early and preventive support. 52% felt they would not have needed support and 48% of the respondents feel they would have needed support when they were under 7 years old. The need for support when children were young is divided quite equally, however, if they would have received support anyway at that age, 68% feel it would have benefitted them in their later life. This means that even though help and support is not always perceived to be needed at the time, it is largely believed to be beneficial in the long run. Early support would make their life more understandable and less isolated, as they would not have to ponder on these questions all by themselves and often postponed into late teenage years or early adulthood. It would also bring them comfort knowing they are not alone and abnormal. Help is available, and adults are indeed "on their side" – they just didn't realize this is an issue before.

A whopping 100% of the respondents find it important to support Third Culture Kids in Early Childhood Education and Care. The clear answer to my research question 'Is supporting Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care important?' is "yes". It is important because Third Culture Kids themselves have now spoken and stated they would have needed support when they were young and even many of those who feel they would not have needed support admit that it would have been useful for them to receive it, regarding their later life.

This thesis proves that Third Culture Kids should be supported already in early childhood education and care and definitely later on in life as well. Support is extremely important for these children's wellbeing. The issues that Third Culture Kids struggle with when they are young include their appearance, which may be different than others', keeping up with the multiple languages and accents they may have and fitting in and being "normal", equal members of groups. They want to blend in with their surroundings. Simply taking the cat out of the bag and discussing the thoughts, emotions and fears TCKs may be having with trustworthy adults as well as bringing differences and cultures up in early childhood education groups could have long-term effects on these children's wellbeing. When TCKs grow older their hardships focus more on settling down, searching and finding a "home", building and keeping long-term relationships and issues concerning their roots: their identity, where are they from, who are they and where do they belong. These are tough subjects for anyone, let alone for those whose pieces of themselves are scattered around the globe. Bringing these up early on and speaking of these together could make it easier to process.

The result of the thesis could and should be discussed and utilized in early childhood education and care. It is recommended also for elementary and secondary school, with adjustments

to the type of support. Older children can understand and want to dig deeper than under 7 - year olds.

The last part of the questionnaire asked the Third Culture Kids for tips what could be done in early childhood education and care to support TCKs. The following are suggestions how TCKs can be supported and how all children can be taught about diversity in ECEC:

— Reading story books about looking/thinking/being different and follow-up questions such as "have you ever felt different?" "how did that make you feel?" "how can you help a new friend?"

— Setting aside time to truly listen to children, ask, and discuss

— Giving children space to share their stories and experiences – but not bringing them or any other differences up without their will

— Having a pen pal or a "godson/goddaughter" from those countries TCKs feel connected to. Stay in touch, send photos and read news

— Trust practices

— Complimenting skills rather than appearance/fashion as this may put children involuntarily on the spot

— "Suomi2" (second language lessons) could focus on more than just language, such as helping children to integrate into the community

— Discussing about different countries, cultures, foods, religions, customs behaviors and so on through play, drama, dance, stories, art and other creative methods.

— Having a world map and marking every country the children have lived in or visited

— Giving positive attention to diversity, how people can see things differently and have different opinions around the world

— Raising awareness and educating parents how to support their Third Culture Kids

— Co-operation with parents. As they are the masters in teaching about their culture to the children, parents could be called in to perform rituals, celebrate holidays and traditions, cook etcetera with the children and just discuss about life

— Helping children to find their own (cultural) strengths and lift their self-esteem

— Teach coping and self-regulation methods for when they feel low

By law and Finnish regulations, it is each child's fundamental right to have their own language, culture, religion and worldview. As kindergartens are becoming more and more multicultural and diverse it makes sense to teach these issues from a very young age to make children comfortable with one another and prevent bullying due to differences. The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2017) states that languages, cultures and worldviews are to be integrated into all activities and thus teaching about Third Culture Kids, the by-product of an international globalised world, should be in curriculum as well. It is the 21st century and we should start acknowledging the effect increased travelling and living in "third cultures" abroad has on our children and how to support them; what kind of help they need to turn their hardships into strengths. Furthermore, as stated in the National Core Curriculum, "making multilingualism visible supports children's development in a culturally diverse world", which not only suggests that making multilingualism visible is beneficial for Third Culture Kids but for all children who are in early childhood education and care: making multilingualism and multiculturalism "the norm" prepares them for the world they are entering.

7 Conclusion

To put it simply, it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education. 100% of the Third Culture Kids who took part in the survey felt this is important. 48% said they would have needed support when they were young and 52% answered they didn't feel they would have needed support, yet if they would have received support 68% believed it would have been beneficial for their later life. Out of 24 Third Culture Kids 21 said they have struggled in life due to their TCK background with issues such as feeling out of place, fitting in and finding a home.

What this thesis has proven is that the TCK background and what it entails should indeed be discussed already when children are young, within homes and family but also in early childhood education, to make later life easier. As of now Third Culture Kids often struggle with issues of feeling different and out of place alone. These findings are recommended to be utilized in in establishments of early childhood education and care.

What was a surprising revelation was that as TCKs age, their struggles also change. This of course is true of any person – as we develop and grow we begin to think about complex issues and worry about different things than when we were younger. But what was interesting about these TCKs was that their core worries when they were children were about blending in to their surroundings. They just wanted to fit in and not stand out. They felt comfortable in international settings as everyone looks different than one another but otherwise often felt like an outsider. As TCKs grew older they started pondering deeper questions such as where are they from, where or what is home, where are their roots. Most have not found "home" yet, they are still searching. Some have moved abroad again in search of home. Others have found home in people. These core thoughts were found when analyzing the results; when the most frequent words the TCKs used in their answers were counted, clear patterns arose.

During the writing process a few setbacks were suffered. At first personal interviews were the desired method of information retrieval but were too difficult to conduct in the given timeframe and also due to physically relocating to another city. After finding thousands of TCKs all around the world in a handful of Facebook groups it was decided to conduct an online survey. Another backset was discovering these Facebook groups have research blocks and do not support linking questionnaires on their pages. In the end the Third Culture Kids from the writer's own circle of friends and acquaintances were personally contacted and the study went on.

Throughout the writing process, while reading about Third Culture Kids and conducting a qualitative research myself, I learned much more than I would have predicted beforehand. In addition to the results I learned about how our world is changing – the 20th century and now the 21st have truly been a period of fast growth and change. Migration and travelling have increased making the world a smaller place. Globalisation and information technology connect people from all around the globe and now we are seeing a growing number of third culture children who have grown up in a different place than where their parents have grown up in, in a culture that is not their own to begin with but end up owning a part of that culture, and many other cultures as well. Information of Third Culture Kids is scarce, but I soaked up as much as I can and found it all mind-blowingly interesting.

Shall I ever continue researching the field of Third Culture Kids or anyone else wish to follow my footsteps, I have a few thoughts on what could be done next: First, as support is now proven to be needed, it could be studied *what kind* of support do the children need. What would help these Third Culture Kids from struggling so much in their life? Secondly, as this thesis focused on the importance of support in early childhood education and care, it would be interesting to study TCKs in general and their need for support in their senior years: did they ever find "home", settle down, root themselves deep enough to feel comfortable in one place? Thirdly, a study gathering more quantitative data on Third Culture Kids would be an interesting read. How many Third Culture Kids are there in Finland? How about in the world? Projections for the future? This qualitative study and these future studies would together provide us with much needed information and a fairly clear image of the need for support for Third Culture Kids.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Cover Letter

Belonging everywhere and nowhere: The struggles of Third Culture Kids and why it is important to support them in early childhood education and care

Hi all,

My name is Rebekka Halme, a fellow Third Culture Kid (TCK) and final year student in Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Finland, currently finishing my Bachelor's thesis in Social Services and Early Childhood Education. I will graduate to be a kindergarten teacher.

In Finland, at least, the knowledge of TCK's is quite sparce and the support non-existent. I am trying to find out do TCK's themselves feel the need for support when they are young. The title of my thesis is "Belonging everywhere and nowhere: The struggles of Third Culture Kids and why it is important to support them in early childhood education and care".

I would greatly appreciate it if you could take part in my short survey and tell me about your thoughts and experiences. Participation is voluntary and your responses will be anonymous.

If you would like further info of my thesis, please don't hesitate to contact me or my thesis supervisor:
rebekka.halme@student.laurea.fi
riikka.kanervo@laurea.fi

Thank you so much,

Rebekka Halme

Appendix 2: The Questionnaire

Belonging everywhere and nowhere: The struggles of Third Culture Kids and why it is important to support them in early childhood education and care

Age

☐ 15 - 20 years old

☐ 20 - 25 years old

☐ 25 - 30 years old

☐ 30 - 35 years old

☐ 35 - 40 years old

☐ 40 + years old

☐ Under 15 years old

Gender

○ Female

○ Male

○ Other

○ Do not wish to enclose

When you were under 7 years old, were you living (/had you lived) in a country other than your passport country?

○ Yes   ○ No

When you were under 7 years old, did you receive any support regarding your Third Culture Kid (TCK) childhood?

By support, I mean did you deal with the situation in any way; talk about your feelings and thoughts, prepare beforehand, unload, compare experiences, learn more about the uniqueness of TCK's including the advantages and hardships, learn what to expect, have your emotions valified etc.

○ Yes   ○ No

If yes, where did you receive support from?

You can select multiple options.

☐ Parents

☐ Other family

☐ Kindergarten, preschool, school

☐ Peers, others in a similar situation, fellow TCK's

☐ "home country" community

☐ Saturday School

☐ Websites

☐ Therapy / counselling

☐ Other, please specify

If yes, what kind of support?

Would you of needed support at the time (when you were under 7 years old)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Why?

How about later on in life?

◯ Yes
◯ No

If you would have received support during childhood (under 7 years old), do you think it would have benefited your later life?

◯ Yes
◯ No

Please specify:

Have you struggled later on in life due to your TCK background?

For example with your identity, fitting in, feeling out of place, settling down, finding "home" etc.

◯ Yes
◯ No

If yes, how?

Do you think it is important to support Third Culture Kids in early childhood education and care?

In day cares, kindergartens, preschools, schools etc.

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, why?

Any tips on how to do this in early childhood education and care?

Thank you for your participation!