

Fluid Identity and Cultural Sensitivity in Youth

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Abstract

This is a study on fluid identity and cultural sensitivity in youth. It is important to demonstrate how an individual's fluid identity can help the individual understand who they are. The need for individuals today to develop cross-cultural competencies and sensitivities is becoming more necessary, especially for youth who are developing their identity. Fluid identity can be described as an identity that is constantly changing or is constantly evolving. Both cultural identity and cultural experiences effect how individuals perceive their world, their beliefs and values. Within this study, the participants will be Canadian students, International students, and youth who have attended international summer camps in Switzerland. I am hypothesizing Canadian students will have a strong identity and fewer international experiences and will therefore score lower on cultural sensitivity. Similarly, I am hypothesizing that youth with international experiences, the International students and Camp youth, will report more fluid identities, and will therefore score higher on cultural sensitivity. In this study identity commitment and cultural sensitivity will be measured through the online survey that involves participant endorsing responses associated with higher sensitivity towards youth of multiple nationalities, race, ethnicities, religions, and beliefs. This study will allow exploration of whether or not international/exposure to multiple cultures experiences enhances cultural sensitivity by allowing a comparison between students with many international/exposure to multiple cultures and students with limited experiences.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

There is an increase in the number of youth who have a fluid identity. By the year 2000, those now deemed ‘visible minorities’ in the language of Canadian multiculturalism, will be the city’s majority (Yon, 2000). As an individual who identifies as a “third culture kid,” ideas around fluid identity and, more specifically, how identity formation may be informed by experiences with different cultures, have always been of great interest. As the world is changing and Canadian society is becoming increasingly culturally diverse, I question how young peoples’ experiences with cultural diversity, both locally and abroad, influence their cultural sensitivity and their sense of their own identity.

My research focuses on identity and cultural sensitivity as reported by three groups, namely Canadian Brock University students, International Brock University students, and International Camp students. The first two groups are enrolled in Educational Study at Brock University and the third group consists of students who attended a summer camp in Switzerland. By examining these three groups in terms of their level of experience with cultural diversity and their self-reported experience of identity formation and cultural sensitivity, this thesis research examines the challenges and advantages faced by third culture children, and begins to explore the concept of fluid identity.

I investigated whether or not having a fluid identity is linked with having a stronger cultural sensitivity by administering an online survey to all three groups and interviewing two participants from each group. Barker and Moore (2011) found that individuals with fluid identities have a curiosity for travel, desire to go on community service trips in third world countries, and an ability to be friendly and accepting with youth no matter their skin color,

religion, gender, ability or disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. They also identified some disadvantages for youth with a fluid identity such as a lack of sense of belonging. I argue that awareness of these disadvantages and advantages is important to the public and academic research. I am predicting that youth with fluid identities will show evidence of having stronger cultural competence. Therefore, this research study is guided by the following two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that Canadian students will report having a strong national and/or cultural identity and fewer international experiences. My second hypothesis is that International students and Camp youth will report having a more fluid identity and will therefore report higher cultural sensitivity as a result of engaging in more international experiences.

In the following literature review, the term identity is examined more generally to set the stage for a discussion of more nuanced identities. A number of key terms are also defined including fluid identity and cultural competence, which are particularly important terms guiding this research. Research on fluid identities in youth is a particular area of focus as there are many categories in which an individual may have a fluid identity such as international adoptees, multilingual youth, and transgendered youth.

Literature Review

Identity

Prior to developing the term of ‘fluid identity’, defining the concept of identity is essential. Identity can be described as both visible and invisible traits of self that influences the configuration of the self (Berry, 2013). Furthermore, the way an individual defines oneself can be connected to relevant cultural categories such as values, language, traditions, and customary beliefs (Berry, 2013). The definition of identity has often concentrated on ideas that can be

inflexibly defined based on these traits being concrete (Berry, 2013). Identities are shaped by historical experience and culture; the process of an identity is becoming, rather than being, stagnant (Pham, 2013). Many individuals develop a strong identity commitment to their national identity or cultural identity. Identity commitment within a common identity in a community demonstrates positive group integrations (Berry, Kunst, Sam & Thomsen, 2015). Another study demonstrates that identity commitment may play a role in the mental-health of youth in particular while forming identity (Berzonsky & Ciecuch, 2016). While the importance of identity commitment, “I know what I believe in and I don’t believe”, is significant, those with a fluid identity are able to adapt quicker and be more open to diverse cultures (Berzonsky & Ciecuch, 2016; Makalela, 2014). For example, research has shown that having identity commitment gives individuals a sense of direction and drive in life, moreover it aids personal independence in regards to decision making, problem solving, and being more self-aware (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Berzonsky, 2003). Identity for some is straight forward, but for other youth it is complex. What makes an identity, fluid?

Some of the answers to the question of what makes an identity fluid can be found in the work of Deleuze and Guattari of ,1987, more specifically their theory on the rhizome. The rhizome can be seen as the roots of a plant that is constant and intertwining, creating fluidity. Moreover, a multiplicity is also a synonym of a rhizome that allows for a variety of measurements (Humphreys, 2013). In addition, research by Meeus et al. (1999) concluded that those who have identity commitment tend to also have more personal effectiveness; therefore they tend to have success with achieving goals, and are able to manage stressful situations in life. By becoming acculturated with different cultures, one’s perception of identity develops, creating more roots of the rhizomatic plant (Humphreys, 2013). The following concept can be defined as

acculturation; its earliest definition is “comprehending those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent change in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.” (Herskovits, 1937, p. 259). The Latin expression ‘*liberum arbitrium*’ offers the opportunity and strength of choice; this expression suggests that there is no truth to what is culture and that it is unidentifiable (Jelen, 2011). Furthermore, Jelen (2011) argued that when analyzing post-modernism in terms of identity patterns, identity can be categorized as overlapping and combining ethnicities, and a post-modern identity has no end. There are many categories that can shape an individual’s fluid identity.

Yon (2000) described the concept of ‘cultural pluralism’ in the following way; if an individual is culturally aware of other identities then the individual will become more accommodating, and express a desire to integrate with them and including those identities. Moreover, Yon (2000) argued there is also a relationship between a fluid identity and the sense of belonging and longing for belonging, in which their sense of belonging gradually shifts with cultural awareness. This research demonstrates that a sense of identity and belonging can change throughout adolescence and young adulthood.

In Yon’s (2000) ethnography, he explored the complex perspective of identity and culture through high school student’s voices in Toronto. He explored identity through many topics such as race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. He focused on differences, globalization, and identity in order to understand how youth identify themselves. Furthermore, he discussed the concept of fluid identity, which can be described as a constantly evolving identity (Yon, 2000). As the title of the ethnography states, the concept of an ‘elusive culture’ is described as correlating identities to relationships. The relationships have different categories within oneself that affect culture,

relationships to peers, relationships with the representations, relationships to the representational practices in oneself and finally the relationship between cultural identities (Yon, 2000). This suggests that individuals with a fluid identity focus less on their pride for a nation but more on strengthening relationships with others. He stated that youth with a fluid identity might feel less closeness or identification with a particular country but more of a bond between different relationships they have with people.

As previously mentioned, there is a relationship between how one sees oneself and how one interacts with the world around them, which is a function of psychosocial and cultural identity development. For youth, a large part of the connection between identity and youth is education as it is a large part of the development of their cultural identity formation (Proweller, 1999). Therefore, this literature review focuses on the research related to identity development among International students and third culture kids, while taking into consideration multiple influences such as multilingualism, international adoption, and transgender youth, to give some insight on youth and fluid identity.

Canadian Identity

First, it is important to define national identity; national identity can be defined as the shared values and aspirations of a national group, but in an individual sense it can be identified as an attachment to one's nation (Raney, 2009). In the early 1990s, Canadian identity used to be divided between the Quebecois, which was categorized as "ethnic identity", whereas the rest of Canada was identified as "civic nationalism" (Winter, 2014). These terms were applicable to Canada, as it was divided between the French and English identities. As immigration has further diversified the Canadian population, research is showing that Canadian identity has become a multi-layer identity, as Canadian nationalism consists of multinational communities but also

includes other ethnic groups (Lammert & Vormann, 2014). In the 21st century, people have immigrated to different countries other than their own in order to find a better life and job opportunities (Grant, 2016). Canada is one of the countries with the most immigrants (Grant, 2016). Research findings demonstrate that being a Canadian citizen is not enough to confer a national identity, but rather engaging in Canadian society as an active citizen is essential to the development of national identity (e.g., voting, observing Canadian laws such as not drinking before the age of 19 in Ontario) (Grant, 2016).

Raney (2009) suggested that, recently, many Canadians have a strong national identity, but it might not fit exactly to what the civic and ethnic identity was known to be in the past. Researchers also discuss how Canada's national identity can be defined as acceptance for diversity (Cros, 2012). Consequently, there may be Canadians who are highly culturally tolerant, and Canadians who may be less culturally tolerant, which may lead to some Canadians feeling a strong sense of pride and some less so, due to the increase of new immigrants into the country. Given this literature, the findings of this study may find a mix of participants who feel a strong national identity and those with a weak national identity possibly due to having immigrated to Canada recently.

Fluid Identity

As several theorists have critically developed the concept of a fluid identity through a post-modernist lens, it is important to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages in a multiplicity of identities. In the field of study of language, a combination of Kramsch's (1993) theory of interculturality and Norton's (2000) theory on interaction control are components of the exploration of cultural identity in a cross-cultural perspective. Identity is compiled of a multiplicity of roles that enable an individual to participate in multiple networks (Stryker &

Burke, 2000). Because of these multiple networks, identity may be conceived as having various perspectives depending on the social context (Stryker & Burke, 2000). With the knowledge that language has an impact on the cultural identity of youth, developing the association of multilingualism in the identity of an International student is significant. Therefore, one can note that language is an aspect of having a fluid identity, as those youth who speak multiple languages have had to gain knowledge from those different cultures. A study done by Fichtner (2015), investigated whether learning about Germany's culture would enhance their understanding of the German language and a participant stated, "It helps us understand it better. German ties in the culture 'cause language and culture are related, and you gotta understand that relation" (Fitchner, 2015, p. 229). The quote from the participant follows the connection between languages and knowledge of cultures to become clearer. The social identity of an individual is defined by multiple characteristics including visual appearance (Li, 2015). According to Li (2015), the social identity can be relevant to fluid identity because it has a variety of characteristics. Typically International students are of dissimilar physical appearance than that of the local students; therefore, it is crucial to factor in their physical appearance in relation to their social identity. Integrating the literature on international adoptees' social identity may be similar to that of International students' fluid identity.

Exploring the relationship between fluid identity, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence is significant to this study. The need for individuals today to develop cross-cultural competencies is becoming more and more necessary (Wang, 2014). The term cultural sensitivity is an essential term for this study; to understand the term fully it is important to denote its historical practice. In the past, the concepts of culture and race were studied extensively within fields of study such as psychology, but, within the past four decades, multiculturalism has

increased globally (Wang, 2014). The term has been defined in psychology as the developmental awareness of an individuals' cultural identity and belief system, and the knowledge and skills to work with various populations (Sperry, 2012). More specifically, Sperry (2012) referred to cultural competence as the capacity and capability to distinguish, respect, and react in an appropriate manner to the concerns and requests of others of different cultures (e.g., ethnic background, SES, genders, or religion). He described cultural competence as being composed of four different components: cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural knowledge, and cultural action. According to Sperry (2012), cultural sensitivity was found to be the most important of the four components as it includes actions such as a welcoming attitude, recognition, and appreciation.

It is important to demonstrate how an individual's fluid identity can help an individual understand who he/she is and their lived experiences. Both cultural identity and cultural experiences affect how individuals perceive their world, and their beliefs and values (Berry, 2005). There are a few categories of youth identified within the research literature as having a fluid identity such as International students and third culture kids.

Throughout a youth's life, there are several ways in society that they can explore their identity. Several groups of youth who are frequently identified as possessing a fluid identity are international adoptees. Researchers have demonstrated this, as in the past two decades in the United States research has found a high prevalence of fluid identity among the 8,481 to 21,616 international adoptees that live in the country (Keokse, Mohanty & Sales, 2006; Mohanty & Newhill, 2006 Shin, 2012). International adoptees' cultural sensitivities and past experiences can be associated with an increased level of fluid identity. There are a number of adoptive mothers that learn the language of their adoptive children's birth country, which helps to develop positive

cultural and racial identities in their children (Shin, 2012). Combining aspects of both the birth country's culture and their own birth country can positively impact an international adoptee's cultural sensitivity.

International adoptees also tend to lack a sense of belonging due to confusion between their birth and cultural identities (Mohanty & Newhill, 2006 Shin, 2012). Research has also found that international adoptees that are dissimilar in appearance from their adoptive parents, and who indicate that they have a hard time linking their outer appearance to their sense of self, often report having an ambiguous sense of identity (Shin, 2012). Therefore, we can presume that familial cultural socialization and sense of belonging can positively influence an international adoptee's fluid identity and cultural sensitivity.

Multilingual individuals are also generally perceived as having a fluid and flexible identity by society (Makalela, 2014). Makalela (2014) explored globalization-influencing language, including immigrants who bring a different language into a country. For instance, many schools in California encourage taking Spanish as a second language, due to the high rate of immigration from Mexico. According to Guardado (2012) students who grow up to be global citizens with a multilingual background are more tolerant to differences. Therefore, it can be presumed that multilingualism may be associated with having a strong cultural sensitivity among youth. In Canadian public schools, the introduction to a bilingual mindset may be introduced as early as kindergarten; therefore youth would learn academically in both English and French. However socioeconomic status (SES) differs in terms of additional enrollment to foreign classes such as Mandarin, due to the language not being offered in public schools in Canada (Guardado, 2012). Socioeconomic status can have a positive association with cultural sensitivity and fluid identity such as multilingualism, opportunities to travel, and international experience.

Finally, transgender youth can be seen as having a fluid identity that is not rigidly structured (Nagoshi, Brzuzy & Terrell, 2012). Transgender youth also struggle with a sense of belonging because they have both their internal sense of being and their outer sense of being (Nagoshi et al, 2012). They also seem to be more open to others of different groups due to the fact that they are themselves part of a non-rigid group (Nagoshi et al, 2012). With this information, an association between transgender youth and cultural sensitivity and a strong association between transgender youth and fluid identity can be assumed. Transgender youth have a fluid gender identity, but they often experience a sense of not belonging (Nagoshi et al, 2012). Transgendered minority youth have been shown to experience more psychological distress than non-minority transgendered youth (Breslow, 2015). With the knowledge that there are multiple youth categories where fluid identity is involved, more specifics can be made on International students and third culture kids in relation to identity and cultural sensitivities.

In sum, fluid identity is a complex and unique concept, which still needs more research in order to compute the term specifically. But overall, researchers gather that a fluid identity is viewed as less of a dichotomy and more of a continuum, therefore that it is always being negotiated (Razon & Ross, 2012). Many researchers use the term fluid identity as an identity, which is flexible, overlapping and at times conflicting (Razon & Ross, 2012). This concept is so timely, Bauman's concept of fluid modernity suggests that individuals, including youth, are no longer remaining in one bounded location, or even part of a single invariable identity (Castanheira, Dixon, Green & Yeagerb, 2006).

International Students

The number of International students is increasing significantly, and they make key contributions toward the local and higher education economy (Brown & Brown, 2013). The

identity of International students is constructed by a multiplicity of layers, which include political, economic, cultural, social, and personal complexities (Marginson, 2014). International students are experiencing multiple, and at times, continuous exposure to diverse norms, ideas, language, education, and culture, which are most likely different to what they experience in their home country. The meaning that these International students place on these different social experiences becomes a new symbolic meaning to their continuous identity (Pham, 2013).

Researchers found that International students who were fluent in French, and who attended a mostly French speaking University in Quebec, adopted Quebecois as their new identity. (Arias-Valenzuela, Amiot & Ryder, 2016). International students may face challenging situations where they have different responses to their sense of belonging and their own representation of their identity. According to a study in a Midwestern University in the United States, investigating the development of female international graduate students, the study displayed that the students had positive experiences, as they were able enough to already have a clear identity formation. These findings are contrary to the notion that International students are vulnerable, and it can be said that the development of International students is very complex (Le, LaCost& Wismer, 2016).

Moreover, the finding is consistent with the healthy immigrant paradox, which displays that immigrants are actually healthier than the natives, despite the stressors associated with immigration and acculturation (Fong, 2008). Social relationships are a very important contributor to youth identity development. However, International students find themselves first making friendships with other International students of their nationality, and later, with locals (Pham, 2013). Identity conflict is one of the main symptoms of culture shock and can affect the well-being of International students. The main identity conflict that an International student struggles

with is the preservation of his/her own group values while trying to conform to the dominant culture's values (Brown & Brown, 2013).

Third Culture Kids

The term third culture kid has evolved through a fluid process over several decades (Perkins, 2004). The most recent term can be defined as an individual of any age or citizenship that has lived the majority of his/her life outside of his/her home country due to their parental career (Perkins, 2004). Consistent with a post-modern identity, third culture kids create new types of selves that are adaptive, and therefore have a unique cultural identity (Barker & Moore, 2011). The literature identifies that there are three major subcategories important to defining third culture kids: sense of belonging, cultural awareness, and globalization.

A frequent negative aspect that often defines third culture kids is that they have lost a sense of belonging. Fail et al. (2004) claimed that third culture kids either feel like they belong everywhere in the world or nowhere. Third culture kids' senses of belonging are three times more powerful to relationships in comparison to any particular country (Fail et al, 2004). When third culture kids go back to their passport country they experience reverse culture shock (Fail et al. 2004). One of the biggest challenges that third culture kids have a hard time overcoming is the lack of belonging, especially to their passport country. When children are adapting to a new culture, they are less focused on feeling a sense of belonging with their new country and are more focused on cultivating social relationships. Typically when adults are adapting to a new culture they already have a sense of who they are, but for children they move before they have developed a strong sense of identity with their home culture. Additionally, when returning to their passport country they feel culturally unique but find that they do not fit in with mainstream society. In essence, they feel rootless (Barker & Moore, 2011).

Third culture kids might also adapt to a particular culture in order to feel included and a sense of belonging. These third culture kids are generally the youth who feel like they belong everywhere. When third culture kids return to their home country they often feel grief over the loss of, or distance from, the friendships that they have made abroad, and they often experience a sense of isolation because they no longer feel they fit in (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). Research demonstrates that a negative aspect of having a fluid identity as a third culture kid is experiencing loneliness due to the lost sense of belonging. But on the other hand, a third culture kid can feel like they belong everywhere in the world, and they can therefore adapt more readily to any cultural situation.

Another benefit often experienced by third culture kids is the tendency to look past stereotypes. Third culture kids have a fluid cultural identity that allows the possibility for them to look past cultural stereotypes; this makes it easy for them to put emphasis on similarities between others instead of differences (Braker & Moore, 2011). But when a third culture kid notices differences they are inclined to learn to respect and accept them, which enhances multicultural coexistence. The most common benefits of being a third culture kid is the quick ability to adapt to new cultural situations, being able to communicate with people from different cultures, having a broader worldview, and having an open mind (Barker & Moore, 2011). There are benefits to a cross-cultural experience for youth. For example, it allows them to be culturally receptive, to understand socially and culturally acceptable rules, and to be more culturally sensitive (Hoersting, & Jenkins, 2011). Attending an International school where everyone is different from each other facilitates an open and embracing approach to individuals characterized by different religions, ethnicities, and other cultural factors (Fail. et al. 2004). Having cultural knowledge about other cultural identities allows youth to accept others, to accommodate

diversity, and to be non-judgmental towards others (Yon, 2000). Therefore, it is assumed in this research study that third culture kids will have a stronger sense of cultural awareness than non-third culture kids.

The main objective of this research is to investigate within the three groups has the most national identity, cultural sensitivity, and fluid identity. The three groups are, Brock University Canadian students, Brock University International students and International Camp youth. My first hypothesis is that Canadian students will have a strong national and/or cultural identity and fewer international experiences. My second hypothesis is that International students and Camp youth will report more “fluid identity”, and will therefore report higher cultural sensitivity due to more international experiences. To investigate these hypotheses, I have used two measures: the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and the Cultural Diversity Self Assessment (CDSA), and fluid identity is assessed through questions on an online survey.

Chapter Two: Methods

Personal Statement

As a third culture kid myself, I wanted to utilize a perspective and methodology that would allow me to use my own experiences to enhance knowledge of youth culture, and fluid identity in particular. Coming to St. Catharines as a Masters student was the first time as a Canadian that I have lived in my country of citizenship. Due to this, I experienced reverse culture shock, as I realized I did not personally connect to having a Canadian identity, although I thought I did prior to arrival. “Most teenagers returning to their passport home do not feel they fit in. Their interests and behavior are different, and they usually feel no one cares about them and where they’ve been” (Eakin, 2001, p.18). This quote expresses the sentiment that I had upon my arrival into Canada and settling into the lifestyle in St. Catharines. Coming to St. Catharines, I felt alone as there were no other third culture kids around me, where as in the past I was always able to find a few with similar experiences as myself. My interests lie in travel and meeting people of diverse cultures; but also I had to create a new social group, which is normally easy when people are open to the idea or do not already have concrete social groups.

However, because I wanted to know the experiences of other youth while comparing youth groups, I chose a mixed methods study. There are many advantages to a mixed methods study. For example, the mix methods approach allows for more data to be collected and for youth to express their voices. Additionally, the study will be stronger when combining quantitative and qualitative research (O’Byrne, 2007). While my study is assessed through measures with Likert scales, the topic of identity and cultural sensitivity is very complex; therefore gaining a deeper understanding through the participants’ expressions creates a stronger understanding of the results.

One of the core course requirements for the Masters program in Child and Youth Studies was Foundation to Child and Youth, wherein a theoretical research paper was one of the major assignments. After much contemplation, my professor suggested that I consider focusing on an ethnography by Daniel Yon as part of a course assignment (Yon, 2000). Yon described the concept of fluid identity through the study of high school students in Toronto identifying themselves in terms of race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality. I was interested in his ethnography because it was very relevant to my own personal upbringing. I used a structured interview method to interview six participants

Methods

This research study recruited three groups of youth participants to investigate the relationship between cultural identity, especially fluid identity, and cultural sensitivity. In particular, this research focuses on fluid identity and explores whether having a fluid identity is associated with higher cultural sensitivity. This study focuses on comparing Canadian students and International students at Brock University, and Camp youth (youth who have attended an international summer camp in Switzerland) in terms of their self-described cultural identity and how fluid that identity appears to be, and their overall cultural sensitivity. I hypothesized that Canadian students have a strong national and/or cultural identity and fewer international experiences and therefore score lower on cultural sensitivity. Similarly, I hypothesized that International students and Camp youth report more fluid identities, and therefore score higher on cultural sensitivity. In this study, cultural sensitivity was measured through a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire and involves a participant endorsing responses associated with higher sensitivity towards youth of multiple nationalities, race, ethnicities, religions, and beliefs. This study explores whether international exposure to multiple cultural experiences enhances cultural

sensitivity by allowing a comparison between students with many international exposures to multiple cultures and students with limited experiences.

The third group, the Camp youth, are particularly important as they focus on identity and cultural sensitivity by examining some younger participants who have all had international exposure to multiple cultures and are more likely to demonstrate evidence of fluid identity given that they have had these experiences at a young age. These youth have at one point attended an international summer camp in Switzerland and are from all over the world. They tend to come from socioeconomically advantaged backgrounds and many of them are children of parents who are diplomats or have been deployed for work in multiple countries. The participants in the International student group are likely to have some level of fluid identity due to their international experiences.

A total of 111 students completed the online survey: 43 Canadian students, 31 International students, and 37 Camp youth. The online survey (see Appendix 1) consisted of the following measures: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 2010), the Cultural Diversity Self-Assessment (CDSA; Garner & Orbital Approach Design, 2014), and several open-response questions (see below). The MEIM is a measure of individual ethnic group membership or identity commitment. It was designed for use with adolescents and young adults from diverse groups and has demonstrated good reliability (Phinney, 1992). This scale will be used in the study to examine identity in terms of identity commitment or identity exploration. The CDSA is a broad measure, which assesses topics such as class, gender, sexuality, and stereotypes. This scale will be used to assess cultural sensitivity. The scale used to measure fluid identity will be a compilation of questions based on the literature on fluid identity, which will be used in an open-ended question format.

After the participants completed the online survey, they had an opportunity to indicate whether or not they were interested in being contacted for participation in a follow-up interview. Two participants were interviewed across each of the three student groups; Canadian students, International students, and Camp youth. A semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 2) was used, which investigated in more detail and depth the experiences of the participants related to fluid identity and cultural competence and sensitivity. The interviews allowed the interviewees to share in-depth information about their cultural experiences. The student participant interviews from the Camp group took place through Skype as they live all around the world. The interviews with the other two student groups took place in person or via Skype if they were not located in St.Catharines at the time of the interview. All interviews were recorded on my phone with a recording application. Convenience sampling was used, as those were the 6 participants who were willing to be interviewed, beginning with a Brock University participant. Data collection for my quantitative section was done in April 2016 when the *Qualtrics* survey was launched.

Online Survey

The online survey was designed and delivered through *Qualtrics* survey software. The link to the survey was made available to potential participants through various means such as e-mail and as a post in Facebook groups. Before participants began the survey they were provided with an electronic consent form to read; participants had to click to agree to participate before they could access the survey. Some of the Camp youth were minors and required parental consent prior to being provided with the link to the survey, at which point they provided their assent, to participate. The parental consent form was sent via e-mail and then needed to be returned with a parental signature prior to the link to the survey being sent. As previously mentioned, the online survey included a mix of scales and open-response items including the

MEIM and the CDSA. The open-response questions included items such as: “Have you ever struggled with developing your identity, please explain in what ways?” Another open-ended question was, “Do you believe you have a good sense of your identity?” which helps explain what assisted the youth in creating their sense of identity, in order to examine fluid identity. The last open-ended question, “ How do you think our world can start to accept more people who are different”, is aimed at investigating more on cultural sensitivity based on the participants responses. The purpose of these questions was to qualitatively explore the participants’ perspectives on their cultural identity and interactions with others. The online survey took approximately twenty minutes, depending on how much participants contributed to the open-response questions. At the end of the survey, participants had the option to accept an interview or not, allowing me to contact them to interview them. Those who participated in the interview and sent in a ballot form had a chance at winning 1 out of 2 gift cards, as those who participated in an interview automatically received a gift card.

Interviews

The interviews were an important component of the study as they provided an opportunity to explore some of the results in greater depth. Interview participants often provided more information than can be captured in a survey approach, and in this way provided deeper insights that can complement the quantitative aspect of the research. The interviews served as a method that complemented the quantitative components and explored some of the themes touched on in the open-response questions in more depth. All interviews were conducted according to the same interview schedule (see Appendix 2).

I conducted individual interviews with two participants from each of the three groups, resulting in a total of six interviews. The interviews included eight questions that closely

examined identity formation, fluid identity, and cultural sensitivity based on past literature (see Appendix 2). For those students located close to Brock University, I conducted the interviews in person and used a recording application on my smart phone. For those participants located far from the university, I conducted the interviews via Skype, while using the recording application on my smart phone. Those who participated in an interview automatically received a gift card of \$25 value as a compensation of their participation. The participants were informed verbally that they were being recorded and that they could withdraw at any point in the interview. In addition, they were given a consent form and asked to sign it (in person or prior to the interview via e-mail) in order to proceed to the interview. For those interviews that were conducted in person, the location chosen was a study room in the library to assure privacy and ease of access. After each interview, I asked the participant if he/she felt comfortable with the interview and if he/she had any questions.

Interviewee Characteristics

Roy, a 23-year-old Canadian male Brock University student in the music department, grew up in Virgil, Ontario. Ashley, a 22-year-old Canadian female Brock University student in the history department, grew up in Mississauga. Ben, a 20-year-old international male business student at Brock University, identifies as Israeli but lived in Poland for a majority of his life. Martin, a 23-year-old international male business MBA student at Brock University, identifies as Indian. Hannah is a 17-year-old Camp youth whom identifies as a third culture kid; her parents are from the United States and Malaysia, and they currently live in Malaysia. She attended the international summer camp in Switzerland for 8 years. Elena is a 14-year-old Camp youth whom identifies as American and Greek, and currently lives in New York City. She has attended the international summer camp in Switzerland for 5 years; next summer she will be attending an

international camp in the United Kingdom. Pseudonyms were used for each participant for anonymity purposes.

Analysis

After the data collection was complete, I transcribed the interviews from the audio-recordings into Microsoft Word. For the open-ended questions from the survey, I transferred the results from *Qualtrics* into Microsoft Word. The same type of analysis occurred between the open-ended questions and the interviews. Subsequently, I manually coded the transcripts. First, I organized the data according to the questions that were asked and then based on common themes that emerged out of the data. Researchers encourage mixed methods design, as qualitative research is able to find results that quantitative research may not be able to display, such as themes and quotes. Whereas quantitative research is exemplary for reporting data on a level such as “high”, “medium”, and “low” (Guetterman, Fetters & Creswell, 2015), qualitative research allows for the unearthing of emergent and overlapping themes (Helliwell, Moverley, & Vinall-Collier, 2015). As Strass and Corbin (1996) described, the researcher allows common themes to emerge from the data. Emergent coding is a type of analysis that is used to see if the data is consistent with the prior assumptions, theories or hypothesis (Jackson & St. Pierre, 2014). The main purpose of emergent coding is to examine the raw data and allow research findings to emerge from frequent themes (Jackson & St. Pierre, 2014). Additionally, the quantitative data was captured by *Qualtrics* and transferred to *SPSS* (program for statistical analysis in social sciences). After the data was entered in *SPSS*, the data was cleaned in order to run the analysis. A one-way ANOVA was run on both measures on the three groups and conducted, and the various measures of identity and cultural sensitivity were coded and scored to assess the means. New composite variables were created by the appropriate questions from measures of the MEIM

and CDSA, then the means were compared. Those three composite variables were fluid identity, identity commitment, and cultural sensitivity. One-way ANOVAs were run on those three groups.

Chapter Three: Results

This study focused on the constructs of fluid identity and cultural sensitivity as defined in the literature review. I hypothesized that Canadian students would have a stronger national/cultural identity and fewer international experiences and would therefore score lower on cultural sensitivity. Additionally, I hypothesized that International students would report more fluid identities, and would therefore score higher on cultural sensitivity. Similarly, I hypothesized that the Camp youth would have similar scores as the International students. The overall goal of this study is to explore whether or not international exposure or experience to multiple cultures enhances cultural sensitivity by allowing a comparison between students: Canadian students at Brock, International students at Brock and youth who have attended international summer camps in Switzerland. A mixed methods design that utilized an online survey (see Appendix 1) with open-ended questions and 2 Likert scale measures (MEIM and CDSA), as well as interviews, was used to examine differences and similarities between the three groups.

There were 111 participants; 43 Canadians, 31 International Students and 37 Camp youth. Looking at gender frequencies out of the 111 participants, there were 70 females and 40 males, and one who identified as transgender. Current geographic location is an important descriptive of the participants; out of the 111 participants 65 are located in Canada, 17 are in the United States, 15 are in Europe, 2 are in Asia, 6 are in the Middle East, 5 are in South America and 1 is in Africa. The mean age of the participants is 22-years-old. There are 8 participants between the ages of 14–17 years, those who have attended international summer camps. There are 86 participants who are between the ages of 18–25-years-old, and these participants belong to all 3 groups: Canadian, International Students, and Camp youth. There are 17 participants who

are between the ages of 26–31 years, and these are participants completing graduate studies and belonging to either the Canadian or International student group at Brock University.

When grouping the participants into the 3 population groups, their age, their birth location, and their parents' location were taken into consideration. When classifying a participant as Canadian, their current location, birth location, and parent's location would be considered as criteria for classifying the participant as Canadian. When classifying a participant as an International student their individual and their parents' locations would not indicate Canada as a location. When classifying the participant as Camp youth, their location, birth location, parents' locations and age were examined.

Measures

Two measures were used in this study, the MEIM and the CDSA. The MEIM measures ethnic identity development involving two factors, including ethnic exploration and identity commitment. The CDSA measures an individual's own cultural sensitivity. Other questions in the survey, such as open-ended questions and demographic questions, were included to examine fluid identity. Composite variables were created from the MEIM and the CDSA to examine fluid identity, identity commitment, and cultural sensitivity. The questions chosen were past on past literature on the terms and deemed suited for the variable. The fluid identity variable consisted of questions from the MEIM (i.e., items 4, 8, 9, 15, 17, and 18) and questions from the CDSA (i.e., items 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, 25, 28, and 31). Number four in the MEIM expresses, "I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own"; and number eight denotes, "I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life". These questions involve fluid identity as it is indicating that interacting with those of different cultures is a positive and that their ethnic identity is unclear, which reconnects to the literature on fluid identity. Number

eleven in the CDSA expresses, “I have multiple friends from a variety of ethnicities and abilities”; and question twenty-two indicates, “I include culturally diverse people in team decision making processes that impact them”. The identity commitment variable consisted of questions from the MEIM (i.e., items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16) and questions from the CDSA (i.e., items 9, 16, 19 and 21). Number five from the MEIM states, “I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership”; and number seven indicates, “I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn’t try to mix together”. These questions were appropriate for the variable identity commitment based off of the literature; both questions indicate ethnic group identity membership is ideal. For the CDSA, number sixteen expresses, “I know the stereotype of my ethnicity”; and number nineteen displays, “I understand that I’m a product of my upbringing and believe there are valid beliefs other than my own”. The cultural sensitivity variable was composed of questions from the MEIM (i.e., items 4, 9, 17, and 18) and questions from the CDSA (i.e., items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 31). From the MEIM question nine indicates, “I often spent time with people of other ethnic groups other than my own; additionally number seventeen denotes, “I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups”. These questions are relevant to cultural sensitivity based on literature on how cultural sensitivity increases the desire to interact with others and become more accepting. Those questions demonstrate that the individual enjoys in person interactions with those of other ethnic identity. From the CDSA, number one denotes, “I am aware of my own biases and how they affect my thinking; and number two expresses, “I can honestly assess my strengths and weaknesses in the area of diversity and try to improve myself”. These questions were combined to best capture how these

terms are conceptualized within the literature.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative aspect of the study compared the mean scores of the two main measures in this study for each of the three population groups: Canadian students, International students, and the Camp youth.

Initially, 128 participants completed the online survey on the *Qualtrics* software program. The data were transferred from *Qualtrics* into *SPSS* and all questionnaires were reviewed for completeness. If a pattern of responses indicated that the participant had unsuccessfully completed the questionnaires, meaning that they were spoiled, they were removed from analysis. Based on the review, 17 questionnaires were eliminated from the analysis due to significant missing data or spoiled questionnaires. The remaining 111 participants were included in the analysis. It should be noted that there were more participants who completed the MEIM, which is likely due to the measure being earlier in the survey. It is possible that participants ran out of time or were experiencing fatigue by the time they reached the CDSA. Therefore, the data for the CDSA consisted of 81 participants, whereas the data for the MEIM consisted of 89 participants.

Subsequently, the data was checked for the assumption of normality on both measures. The assumption of normality was met on the MEIM and was not met on the CDSA. Due to this, participant 59 was deleted from the analysis due to lack of reliability in responses. The participant selected the same level of scoring for multiple questions, therefore was deemed to be an outlier.

A one-way between subject's ANOVA was conducted to compare the MEIM mean scores across all three groups (Canadian students, International Students and Camp youth). The following participants completed the MEIM: Canadian = 37; International = 25; Camp = 27. The

Canadian students' mean was highest ($M = 125.14$), the International students' mean was the lowest ($M = 121.74$), and the Camp youths' mean was in between ($M = 123.20$). Between the three groups, there were no statistically significant differences suggesting that the three groups did not differ in their connection to their ethnic identity. This was contrary to my expectation that the Summer camp students and the International students would have similar means that differed from the Brock students.

Again, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the CDSA from each of the three groups. The following participants completed the CDSA and were included in the analysis: Canadian students = 34; International = 23; Camp = 24. The mean for the Canadian students was the highest ($M = 41.46$), the International students were the lowest ($M = 38.04$), and the Camp youth were in between ($M = 40.08$). The means between the three groups were not significantly different. Taken together, these results suggest that the three groups did not differ in their connection to cultural diversity. This was contrary to my expectation that the Camp youth and the International students would have similar means that differed from the Brock students.

In the next level of analysis new variables were made within both measures. As previously mentioned, the new variables were created using questions from the MEIM and the CDSA. The three new composite variables were fluid identity, identity commitment, and cultural sensitivity. The one-way between subject's ANOVA indicated that the means between the three groups and the three new variables (fluid identity, identity commitment, and cultural sensitivity) were not significantly different.

Since both International students and Camp youth have had similar experiences internationally and through culture exposure, a new variable was created which combined both

International students and Camp youth. A t-test was conducted in order to compare the means between the new variable and the Canadian students on both measures (MEIM and CDSA). The mean for the Canadian students was higher ($M = 2.69$) and the combined mean for the International students and Camp youth was lower ($M = 2.59$). The means between the two new groups and the CDSA were not significantly different. Taken together, these results suggest that these two groups did not differ in their connection to their ethnic identity.

Following that, a t-test was conducted in order to compare means on the MEIM, the mean of the Canadian students was highest ($M = 125.14$), and the combined mean for the International students and the Camp youth was lower ($M = 122.48$). The means between the two new groups and the MEIM were not significantly different. Taken together, these results suggest that the two groups did not differ with their connection to cultural diversity.

Qualitative Research Findings

The qualitative results followed a similar pattern of organization as the quantitative results but demonstrated a more interesting pattern of results. The open-ended questions and the interviews provided a contextual approach with interesting themes, which addressed the research hypotheses.

In the online survey (see Appendix 1), I had open-ended questions that allowed participants to express in more detail some of their cultural experiences. There are three main questions in the survey that are coded by themes. The data from the open-ended questions were first coded according to the question that was being answered; then the descriptive data provided by many participants was coded for emergent themes.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

Emergent themes appeared in the responses of the participants and are summarized in

Tables 1–3 below, and described in the text that follows. The three open-ended questions were designed based on past literature that indicated what factors might be important to explore in relation to fluid identity, identity formation, and ideas around cultural diversity. Emergent coding was used to provide fruitful and detailed insight into a psychological relation between people.

Have you ever struggled with developing your identity?

The first open-ended question on the online survey examined whether the participants had difficulties developing their identity. This question allowed the participants to reflect on their own personal experiences with their identity as a whole. Many participants responded with a “yes” or “no” and others listed the question as not applicable. Many participants who indicated “yes” or “no” also provided descriptive responses to the questions. The participants’ responses were coded first by whether the participant struggled or not with the idea of identity development, and then subsequently the emergent themes were coded throughout the responses (see Table 1). A frequently emerging theme was career identity; the participants indicated that many youth in high school or university have to make important decisions such as what major to study in university, or what career path to embark on after university. A second theme that emerged was cultural identity; many participants indicated that they had difficulties developing their identity based on having a parent from one culture and a parent from another culture. A third theme that emerged was gender identity for those who did not identify as heterosexual or cisgender, meaning an individual who self-identifies with the gender that agrees to their biological sex. Another theme that came up in the data is language; those who speak multiple languages expressed having more difficulties with their identity. Lastly, an important theme for those who struggled with their identity was geographic mobility or the number of times that their families had moved around the world.

Table 1

Themes for the question, “Have you ever struggled with developing your identity?”

Have you ever struggled with developing your identity? (n = 94)

Have Struggled (n = 45)	Have Not Struggled (n = 49)
Career Identity	Religious Identity
Gender Identity	Identity Commitment
Cultural Identity	
Languages	
Moving	

The themes identified in Table 1 emerged by examining the answers to the first open-ended question. In the section below, I describe each of these themes. Many themes that emerged highlighted participant’s struggle with their identity (whether cultural, sexual, etc.). However, the data also revealed that many participants did not struggle with their identities regardless of group category; Canadian, International, or Camp youth. Two major themes, confidence in one’s religious identity and commitment to one’s identity, helped to explain why certain participants did not struggle with their identity.

Theme: Career

As noted previously, several participants indicated that they have struggled with their identity within a career context. Essentially, individuals within each of the groups described how the need to establish a career path and their academic choices connected to that career path were associated with personal identity struggles. For example, a Camp youth described their struggles, “yes, I have struggled in terms of what career path to choose, and how to dress”. A Canadian student felt similar experiences, “yes but only in terms of career interests. I have a multitude of interests, and I have found it difficult to identify with only one career path.” Another comment from an International student was, “only in terms of what kind of job I want to do”. This suggests that identity struggles only occurred for these individuals in a career context.

These quotes emphasize that career identity is a recurrent aspect of what makes identity discovery difficult for youth. This theme occurred throughout all of the three groups. Six participants mentioned career as an aspect of their identity that they struggled with; specifically two Canadian students, three International students and one Camp youth. While this finding does not completely help the understanding of the impact of cultural experiences on identity development, it was a frequent response from the participants and seems significant as a struggle for identity formation.

Theme: Gender Identity

As stated above, a couple participants indicated that they struggled with their identity within a gender specific context. Specifically, the Canadian Brock University students indicated that they had struggled with their gender identity. For example, one participant addressed sexual orientation as a particular struggle that she faced and said, “When I was coming to terms that I identify as a lesbian it was hard at first because I did not know how my family/friends would react but now that I have come out they are accepting, I do not struggle as much.” Further, the following quote discusses another participant’s struggle with gender identity:

“Absolutely. My immigrant grandparents tried to distance themselves from their culture and leave it behind. It has left me to live largely without knowledge of my culture and the history of my family. Also, coming to terms with my gender identity has taken my entire life so far and it’s still a struggle. Gender binary is so engrained and even though I know it isn’t reality, you can’t forget it or leave it behind without a lot of pushback from family, society, and even myself”

While only Canadians discussed having trouble with their gender identity, it is important to note that those participants had difficulties really developing their gender identity, as they did not feel they fit heteronormative ideals and were unable to perform normative gender roles. The other

groups did not express struggles with gender identity, however it is not conclusive that gender identity struggle is not relevant to International students or Camp youth.

Theme: Cultural Identity

Many participants indicated that they have struggled with their identity within a cultural context. Participants within all three groups have struggled when they belonged to two cultural identities. For example one participant stated:

“Yes, I am half Chinese, half English. I have an international accent that is difficult to place and also my facial features are difficult to identify correctly and so growing up I was told that I wasn’t really Chinese but I kind of was. Or that I am white, but kind of am not. So growing up I spent a lot of time struggling to understand what I identified with more. Only as a young adult have I been able to equally appreciate and balance my two heritages and be proud of who I am.”

Several participants stated that if their parent’s cultural identity differed from their own, identity discovery was difficult.

“Yes, I have always struggled with my ethnic and cultural identity. Since my dad doesn’t information of the origins of his side of the family and my mothers’ side is German. My parents always just identified themselves as Canadian rather than the country they immigrated from.”

Other comments highlighted difficulties fitting into a cultural identity, “Yes, in certain regards I’m not fully accepted by Caucasians for being partially Hispanic. Yet at the same time, Hispanics don’t take me seriously because I appear so light skinned.”

These quotes emphasize the overall idea that youth that are experiencing more than one cultural identity struggle due to balancing different cultures. This theme recurred across all three groups: the Canadian students, the International students and the Camp youth. There are 25 participants throughout the three groups who expressed identity development difficulties related to cultural identity. As expressed by participants, based on the participants’ cultural experiences, balancing two cultures may be difficult for identity formation no matter the amount of

international experiences.

Theme: Languages

Some participants noted that they have struggled with their identity discovery due to language being a challenge. Participants in all three groups mentioned language as an aspect of their identity, which they had to negotiate. Five participants noted that language was a part of their identity discovery struggle, and of those five participants, one was a Canadian student, three were International students, and one was a Camp youth. As an International student described, “Yes, learning two languages and living in two completely different cultures was difficult”. While another participant specified that the difference between the accents makes it difficult for identity formation, “Yes. Different people with different accents. It calls for modification of your speech identity and even clothing with respect to the weather and climate change.” Additionally, another participant described a fear of culture, indicating that a language barrier was a struggle for this participant, “Yes, some people were afraid of me because I am Muslim, and some did not like to speak with me because my language is weak.”

These quotes display the general idea that youth, who are multilingual or have a language barrier, have difficulty with developing their identity. This theme was most common for the International students and the Camp youth.

Theme: Moving Around the World

A select number of participants expressed that moving around the world has influenced their struggle with their identity development. Individuals within all three groups mentioned moving as a difficult aspect of identity development. There are five participants who mentioned moving as part of their identity discovery difficulties. Out of the five participants, one Canadian, one International student, and three Camp youth commented on this issue. For example, “When

moving from Caracas, Venezuela to Miami it was difficult to find a new identity within an entire different set of cultural values and customs. Not speaking the language, etc made it hard to reaffirm an identity.”

Another participant included a comment, which is relatable to the term third culture kids, youth who have lived in a country other than their country of citizenship; “Yes because I lived away from my home country for most of my life.” Additionally, a different participant indicated that identity struggles were related to, “Moving around a lot and not fitting in anywhere in particular now.” This quote also can also be related to third culture kids and their struggle to develop their cultural identity.

These quotes describe the general idea that youth who have lived abroad have struggled with developing their identity. This theme was most frequent for the International students at Brock and the Camp youth.

Theme: Religious Identity

As mentioned previously, there were two major themes that emerged out of the data explaining why some participants did not report struggling with their identity. The first of these two themes was confidence in religious identity. An 18-year-old Canadian student described that religious attachment assisted in the development of a strong identity:

“I have not really struggled with developing my cultural identity, though in recent years I have been attempting to embrace my religion more and connect with others who share my beliefs. Because I am not a member of a culturally diverse family, I try to learn about others.”

This quote demonstrates that having a strong sense of religious identity may be an influence in identity discovery. When religion is part of a youth’s life it might enhance their identity commitment. While only one participant included religion as why he/she did not have any difficulties developing their identity it is important to note that this can be a protective factor

within identity formation.

Theme: Commitment of Identity

Identity commitment was the second major theme reported by participants who did not experience struggles with identity formation. This theme can be described as a strong attachment to some form of identity. A couple of participants in the Canadian group inferred that identity commitment has helped them in developing a strong identity and protected them from identity struggles. For example, a Canadian student (24-year-old male) described his experience as, “No, I’ve always felt comfortable identifying as Canadian”. Similarly, a second Canadian student (25-year-old male) defined his experience as, “No, I have always been able to be myself and embrace all the multiculturalism of my country”. These quotes demonstrate that having a strong sense of identity commitment might lead to a strong sense of identity development.

Do you believe you have a good sense of your identity?

In the second open-ended question on the online survey, participants were asked to reflect on their sense of identity and to describe in which ways they had a good sense of their identity. Many participants responded with a “yes” or “no”. Additionally, many followed up by providing descriptive responses to the question. The responses were coded by whether the participant had a good sense of their identity or not, and then subsequently the emergent themes were coded throughout the responses. Ninety participants filled in the question with a response, 76 participants said they had a good sense and 14 said they did not have a good sense. The first level of coding was stated as whether it was indicated that they had a good sense of their identity or not. The second level went into looking at emergent coding. This second question examines how comfortable an individual is with her/his identity while also exploring what aspects contribute to that sense of identity or lack thereof. As literature indicates, third culture kids often lack a sense

of belonging, whereas those with a strong identity commitment frequently have a better sense of identity (Eakin, 1998).

Table 2

Themes for the question, “Do you believe that you have a good sense of your identity?”

Do you believe that you have a good sense of your identity? (n = 90)

Good Sense (n = 76)	Not Good Sense (n = 14)
Knowledge of Heritage	Fluid Identity
Exposure	Balancing Cultural Identities
Values	
Travel	

The following themes in Table 2 emerged by examining the answers to the second open-ended question and describe those who have a good sense of their identity and those who did not. In the section below, I describe each of these themes in order for the participants that did and did not have a good sense of their identity.

Theme: Values

Several participants indicated that values are an important part of what makes up their sense of identity. Fundamentally, participants from all three groups expressed that knowledge of their own values had an influence on their understanding of their identity. Five participants mentioned values as an important part of having a good sense of identity. An 18-year-old female Camp youth participant from Canada and Russia described her experience as, “Yes, I believe I am an individual who knows who she is and where her moral values and beliefs systems are. Knowing who you are about where you are from, where you want to go and how you go about getting there.”

Similarly, this participant is able to find importance in the values of both of her cultural identities:

“Yes I am a westerner who encompasses different cultural values of two countries. Both countries have great pasts but also pasts, which involve some terrible things. I try to learn from my history encompass positive aspects and be open to completely different and new cultures to better develop myself as a multicultural and unbiased person.”

A 17-year-old participant who attended an international camp in Switzerland, who is half American and half Malaysian, reported that she considers herself to be a third culture kid as she has never lived in Malaysia. This quote highlights the importance of values to this third culture youth:

“I do. I feel like because I’ve been so exposed to so many different things - international cultures, customs and values, that my identity and understanding of the world like many other third culture kids is much more developed than others who grew up in sterile environments. Moreover, understanding that a passport, essentially a piece of paper, does not define your identity, but rather you experiences makes me more tolerant and open-minded something I learnt from the international community. I also think because of this I’ve become a stronger, more confident individual through the range of activities I have been able to take part in which has definitely made me and has impacted my ability to adapt and be flexible anywhere.”

These quotes emphasize the frequent theme of values being important to what makes youth feel that they have a good sense of their identity. This theme was noted for all three groups of participants; the Canadian students, International students and the Camp youth.

Theme: Travel

Several participants said that travel provided them with a good sense of their identity. Essentially all three groups expressed travel being important to their identity development. One participant described his/her experience as, “Yes thanks to my family and to the different trips I was able to do”. Another participant discussed travel as being what helped him/her discover his/her values and being part of who he/she is, “Yes, I know what values are important to me and what makes me who I am like travelling, talking to people from around the globe and reading a lot”.

These quotes emphasize the theme of travel as becoming a frequent part of what makes youth become more in touch with their identity. Five participants mentioned travel as an important aspect of how it allowed them to have a good sense of their identity; 2 Canadian, 2 International and 1 Camp youth.

Theme: Knowledge of Heritage

As specified above, some participants felt that they were able to have a strong sense of their identity based on their understanding of their cultural background. This theme was reoccurring for the majority of the Canadian students. The theme of heritage knowledge was described by 11 of the participants as an important aspect of their identity comprehension. While participants from all three groups stated knowledge of their heritage as an important factor (seven Canadian students and three International students), only one Camp youth indicated heritage being important to their sense of identity. For example, a Canadian stated, “Yes, I come from 8 generations of Canadians, a lineage that has built and defended this country. I couldn’t imagine being anything else”. Similarly, another Canadian expressed, “Yes, I know what my heritage is and I identify as Canadian”.

As the previous quotes another Canadian states pride when expressing:

“Yes I do because my parents and I were both raised in this country. There is no doubt to my own identity and the identity of my parents. I think that this gives me a positive ideology for myself, especially because I “fit in” with the rest of the North American natives.”

Youth who had a good knowledge of their heritage discussed it was an important part of their identity comprehension.

Many themes discussed above show that participants from all three groups were able to be confident in their cultural identity (e.g., heritage, travel, and values). However, themes also addressed those who did not have a good sense of their identity. The two major themes that were

outlined, fluid identity and balance, addressed why certain participants did not have a good sense of their own identity.

Theme: Balancing Cultural Identities

One of the frequent themes that emerged in the responses for those who reported having a poor sense of their identity was balancing two cultural identities. Several participants noted that balancing multiple cultural identities caused difficulties in their sense of identity. Three participants mentioned balancing cultures caused them to struggle with having a good sense of their identity. These participants were from the Canadian, International student and Camp youth population. One Canadian participant noted, “As a Canadian, yes. As Metis, not currently, no. At this point I’m not sure what this means to me as far as actively identifying with it.” Similarly, another participant stated that he/she had a good sense of their identity, further he/she discussed their Chinese heritage, which caused an unbalance in their identity:

“I have a good sense of my personal identity, but I wouldn’t say I know a lot about my Chinese heritage because my mother grew up as a US citizen. I also have never been to China and so I am not fully aware of that side of my identity but I embrace part of the Chinese culture that I have been exposed to growing up, as well as my British side from living in the UK.”

This Canadian, who struggled with his/her Canadian and English heritage, is a clear example of being torn between two cultures, “I’m torn between my youth in England and my adult life in Canada. It’s difficult to find your own identity when those around you adopt cultural stereotypes about who you are because of your nationality”. These quotes describe the general idea that balancing multiple cultures can be challenging when developing an identity.

Theme: Fluid Identity

Although not many discussed the theme of fluid identity, the concept was discussed in terms of identity growth, shift, and change. Two participants mentioned fluid identity

specifically as a cause of identity confusion, one Camp youth and one International student. One Camp youth stated, “I think my identity is constantly changing as I grow”. This quote describes the general idea that for some youth, having a fluid identity may be the cause of not having a good sense of their identity. This theme was stated from the Camp youth and International student groups.

How do you think our world can start to accept more people who are different?

The last open-ended question on the online survey examined whether participants believe society, as a whole, can be more culturally accepting. The question allowed the participants to reflect on their own personal experiences or beliefs. Many participants responded with a “yes” or “no” and some left the question blank. Many participants who indicated yes or no also provided descriptive responses. The participants’ responses were coded first by whether they believed the world can be more accepting or not, then the emergent themes were coded throughout the responses (see Table 3).

Table 3

Themes for the question, “How do you think our world can start to accept more people who are different?”

<u>How do you think our world can start to accept more people who are different? (n = 80)</u>	
<u>More Accepting (n = 73)</u>	<u>Not More Accepting (n = 7)</u>
Education	Labels
Exposure	Cultures with opposing values
Media	

The themes identified in Table 3 emerged by examining the answers to the last open-ended question and demonstrate those who believed that society can be more accepting culturally, and those who do not believe it can. Below, I will address each of these themes in order by those who believed that the world can eventually become more accepting, then by those who believe the world will not become more accepting. Participants expressed many topics

associated with the world becoming more accepting, however a few participants believe the world will not become more accepting, based on cultural opposing values and labels.

Theme: Education

As stated above, many expressed that education would be a primary resource for youth to gain more cultural acceptance. This was a reoccurring theme throughout all population groups; Canadian students, International students, and those who attended camp in Switzerland. Thirty participants mentioned education as part of an important aspect that would increase acceptance across the world; all of the participants were well educated therefore it can be understood, as education would be a big part of their lives. Out of the 30 participants, 13 are Camp Youth, 10 are Canadian, and 7 are International students. As this female Canadian participant describes, education on other cultures may create more global acceptance:

“Education on other individuals’ culture. If an individual chooses to not educate themselves then they will remain ignorant to problems within society that are have been and are currently at large such as oppression and mistreatment of members of minority groups. By receiving a fair education for everyone to show what respect is in learning more about each other’s culture.”

For decades the Canadian education system has implemented a multicultural education system; therefore the majority of Canadians have had access to education on diverse cultures. As youth start to formulate their identity from a young age, this participant expresses that education of various cultures at a young age is important, “Through education and starting to educate children from a young age to be accepting and understanding of all human beings.” These quotes emphasize the frequent theme of education as a way to increase acceptance for diversity in the world.

Theme: Exposure

Several participants indicated that exposure to multiple cultures will create more acceptance globally. Thirty participants discussed exposure to individuals of different cultures as a factor, which would increase acceptance globally. The theme of exposure was reoccurring through all population groups, 17 Canadian students, 7 International students, and 13 Camp youth. As stated by a participant, communicating with those of different cultures was a reoccurring theme throughout, “Through talking to each other and recognizing we are all just people”. This quote indicates that communication with individuals of diverse cultures may have been an outlet for multiple participants to gain cultural knowledge. Similarly, this participant discusses in detail travel in combination of communicating with various cultures, “The best way is to travel to other countries, to talk to different people, be respectful and open towards other cultures and try to learn as much as you can”. This quote describes multiple methods in which exposure can be represented, such as communication, travel, and being open towards others.

This participant’s quote goes into more detail on the type of interactions, which would increase a global acceptance

“I believe that people can become more culturally tolerant through exposure to various aspects of foreign culture (e.g. talking to people from that cultural group, understanding the history of the cultural group, being exposed to the cultural contribution of that group to the global community). Essentially. One of the quickest ways to become more culturally inclusive is to contextualize other cultures.”

Exposure was a general theme that encompasses all aspects of interacting with individuals of different cultures, which have influenced youth to become more culturally sensitive.

Theme: Media

A few participants mentioned that a change in media would strengthen acceptance globally. For example, one participant said:

“As the media is one of the most powerful instruments in today’s world, I think that the media should stop focusing on the negative aspects of foreign cultures. Mainly the bad

incidents that happen are highlighted on the television or in newspapers. Turning from the bad news to the good news would be a major step.”

Similarly, another participant discussed the same concept of the media’s information being incorrect, “By ending mass media and giving better information”.

These quotes put an emphasis on media as a significant theme; it can be considered that the media has an influence on how youth believe and see other cultures. This theme was reoccurring through all three population groups. Five participants described the media has an aspect which has an effect on youth and their cultural acceptance, 2 Canadian students, 2 International students, and one Camp youth.

Theme: Labels

As opposed to the other participants, a few felt that society is incapable of being more culturally tolerant, some participants mentioned the theme of labels. A couple of participants mentioned labels as a challenging factor of acceptance globally. For example, this participant said, “Wow. Tough question. I think people are inherently intolerant. We look for ways to classify others and ourselves in order to gain power. Labeling somebody as “different” can cast them into a lower social class.” This quote highlights the theme of labels and stereotypes as part of a reason why some participants indicated that an increase in acceptance globally is unlikely. Those who stated this were Camp youth and an International student. Even though only two participants discussed the idea, it is important to note that not all youth view the world as improving with cultural acceptance.

Theme: Cultures with Opposing Values

A couple of participants indicated that global acceptance is a challenge due to opposing values within cultures. For example, this participant in particular describes the situation in Europe:

“That is a difficult question to answer, in my opinion and experience. Certain cultures have such different ways of prioritizing values that it can be difficult for them to coexist. For example, in Europe, some Muslims, with very traditional religious values have a difficult time fitting into Western European culture. The difference in culture has led, in some cases, to culture clash between the Muslim immigrants and locals. In an ideal world, the best way is to interact with people from other cultures in order to best understand where there can be a middle ground to foster terms of not only tolerance, but acceptance and embrace.”

This quote underlines the idea that cultures with opposing values might have an impact on the world becoming more accepting globally. Although two participants stated this particular idea, it is important to note that some cultural groups may clash based on their values, according to one Canadian participant and one international participant.

Structured Interview Process

The presentation of the results from the individual interviews will follow a similar pattern as that provided for the quantitative interviews. Recall that I hypothesized those Canadian students would report having a strong national identity and fewer international experiences. Likewise, I hypothesized that International and Camp youth would report having a more fluid identity and more cultural experiences.

First hypotheses: Canadian students will report having a strong national/cultural identity and fewer international experiences.

Canadian Participants

The following three themes emerged from the interviews with Canadian participants in relation to the first hypothesis; education, white privilege and stereotypes.

Education

Education was documented by the Canadian interviewees of this study as being a significant factor in their cultural experiences. The participants in this study became more

knowledgeable about their own culture and various other cultures based on their studies, whether it was in high school or university. Ashley described her experience with learning about different cultures by saying:

“I met people from all over the world who had come to Brock and were taking international relations and a lot of them had interests in going to foreign politics or foreign policy in their own country. I met people from Nigeria and places in India. They had completely different cultures and it was really fascinating because got to have classes and seminars with them so I got to know them.” (Ashley)

For both Canadians, education was a principal outlet for cultural knowledge, as their international experiences were minimal. Roy even suggests that he began learning about his own culture through a high school project. Whereas Ashley is a lot more involved with her cultural background through her familial interactions, learning the language, listening to music and other cultural practices.

Additionally, education was noted by both participants in terms of globally becoming more tolerant. This topic can be reflected in the following quote said by Roy:

“I was leading a choir concert on Saturday, and I went into their nursery. I was looking into the nursery and the about of multiculturalism there is now amongst the kids. It is just insane. Different books from different countries and stuff.” (Roy)

This quote emphasizes the idea that Canada is moving forwards as a country in terms of cultural diversity. There were frequent ideas brought up by both participants involving education when it came to cultural openness, due to lack of international experiences.

White Privilege

Both Canadian interviewees revealed that they felt their identity gave them an advantage globally and both discussed the topic of ‘white privilege’. Roy mentioned that being a white male makes him feel that he has an advantage, but that it is dependent on what he does with it.

Ashley describes that it is essential that she is aware of the privilege and that position, which is demonstrated in this quote:

“I’m not one to say that ‘white privilege’, I need to tow hip myself or everything my ancestors have done. I think that’s a little ridiculous. I do think that I need to be aware of the privilege that my position affords me. I think that awareness comes a sense of responsibility that I have to work really hard to bring people up to the position that I’m in or even in further in a sense... Even as a woman, I haven’t really felt discrimination.”
(Ashley)

Similarly, both participants express the need to be aware of their privilege, as they are aware that those without this privilege go through many cultural challenges.

Stereotypes

Both Canadian interviewees have been a spectator to discriminatory action between friendships, as a result of stereotypes. These jokes are not knowingly harmful, displaying that global improvements still need to be made in order to become a more tolerant world. Roy explains how the comment generally is aimed at being a joke and can be reflected in this quote:

“You could be joking about it then you mention something else that you think is related. For example, let’s say you’re joking about being Jewish and he is joking about it, then you bring up something about his family being cheap or something. In your mind it could be a joke because his family is Jewish or something but you could be crossing the line.”
(Roy)

Similarly, Ashley described her experience with her partner being labeled as ‘stupid’ based on his cultural background. Both mentioned that the jokes are based off of stereotypes and not the actual person themselves.

The participants were able to gain knowledge about various cultures through multiple aspects that education was able to project for them; such as attending classes and interacting with the International students in the classes and working on projects involving their identity. They

found their Canadian identity to be an advantage globally, as they stated the term “white privilege”; furthermore, they both noted that it does not hold them back from their obligations towards society. Both participants have experienced acquaintances making stereotypical jokes about a friend’s ethnicity or religion, which caused them to believe that society as a whole is reactionary.

Second hypothesis: International students and Camp youth will report having more fluid identities, and will therefore report having greater cultural sensitivity.

International Participants

Three themes emerged from the interviews with the participants in this study, including education, identity commitment, and generational differences.

Education

Both International students discussed education in various forms, particularly as a resource to connect with individuals of various cultures other than their own. In contrast to the Canadian students, the international participants did not use the education institution as a location where they learned about diverse cultures, but a location where they took the opportunity to interact with those of diverse cultures. Ben expresses this statement further:

“Going to an international school was a big part of it; I got to meet people from all around the world. Making friends with people from China for example, going to their houses, socializing. Being exposed to different things than as a kid.” (Ben)

Similarly, Martin discussed the opportunities he has had within Brock University, as he was involved in several extracurricular activities, which allowed him to interact with students of diverse cultures. Both participants have demonstrated that their schooling has provided them with resources to interact with several youth through social activities.

Identity Commitment

Both international interviewees discussed their identity in different facets, while conveying that their identity still has significance to them. In comparison to the Canadian students, the International students recognized that their identity gave them an advantage but in a more positive sense. Additionally, they recognized that other cultures encompass their identity.

Martin described his experience as following:

“I would say an advantage but I wouldn’t say it’s a big advantage because ultimately your ethnicity can only help you to a limit. After that it’s about your hard work and how you communicate.” (Martin)

This quote explains that while his cultural identity is of value to him, he recognized there is more to his identity than that. Martin expressed less pride towards his Indian identity than Ben had for his Israeli identity. As Ben stated:

“Yeah I would say it does. The history of Israel and Jewish people - I don’t want to say we are different but we have a unique history. Like the Jewish aspect and the secular world: how Israel was raised - I believe Israelis are raised differently than other people.” (Ben)

This quote explores the idea of cultural identity being an important factor in his identity, particularly due to nationality and religion being connected. On the other hand, Martin discussed his cultural identity being an advantage for him in terms of characteristics being associated with being Indian such as having above average mathematic skills.

Generational Difference

Both International participants mentioned that society as a whole is becoming more tolerant in comparison to their parent’s generation. They expressed that due to having more exposure to other cultures, they were able to become more open. Ben mentioned the term globalization in this context as well, and this is described in the following quote:

“It goes back to getting more exposed to different cultures. I’ll go back to this term: globalization. I think my parents right now have primitive views. I see those primitive views as racist but they grew up differently.” (Ben)

This quote explores the idea of exposure to more cultural experiences leading to more openness towards other cultures, specifically more than in the past. As Martin notes, parental views still have an influence on youth perception, and this is highlighted in the following quote:

“How flexible parents are, how they are telling their kids how to behave or how to behave with other ethnicities and cultures.” (Martin)

Both participants’ perspectives for current global acceptance noted that the generation differences demonstrate a progression towards more global acceptance.

Overall, the International participants in the study reported, as expected, that they have more international experiences. But contrary to the expectation of this study, the International students still reported strong levels of national identity. The participants used the educational institution as an outlet for interacting with those of various cultures such as going to their houses and experiencing their culture or meeting them through Brock University. They found their international identity to be an advantage either historically or based on certain characteristics the culture is associated with, but they also identified as international. Both participants expressed that globally, society is moving forward in comparison to previous generations.

Camp Youth Participants

The following participants attended summer camp at an international summer camp in Switzerland. The campers attending the camp come from all parts of the world.

Exposure

Both Camp youth participants explained how their exposure to various cultures was the main source of their diversity knowledge. Contrary to both other participant groups, their

schooling has not been a large part of their cultural experiences. Elena discussed a camp experience in particular:

“I think my camp really helped too with that because it’s a camp with a lot of different countries and people. I think that this is not really answering the question directly but what was really interesting was that there would be these two girls in my group, one was from Israel and one was from Palestine, I think it is really great that they were able to be friends. As they are in a place where in reality those two countries are having a lot of difficulty with each other. At camp we also listened to music from different countries, such as Israeli music.” (Elena)

This quote really expresses the unique opportunities that camp was able to offer to her, which created a more open-minded perspective on different cultures. Hannah expanded further and discusses her social circle as her source of cultural knowledge.

“I’m so accepting of different things and change and that is because of the fact that I’ve been allowed to have so many friends from different cultures and all of that. If I did not have that I don’t think I’d be who I am today... They call it at school, global citizens... I also think I’m very flexible and adaptable and I can fit in potentially in a lot of places that other can’t necessarily.” (Hannah)

Hannah discussed that her experiences have really shaped who she is, and further on described how she identifies as a third culture kid and how it benefits her. Both participants explored the notion that more cultural experiences have impacted their perception of cultural acceptance.

Education

While both participants were still in high school at the time of the interview, the reoccurring theme of education came naturally. Both participants did not demonstrate a relationship with learning about cultures through an academic sense. They took advantage of the clubs and extra-curricular activities to interact with those of different cultures. Elena discussed a specific example of participating in an after school activity, which lead her to gaining more cultural knowledge:

“Our school has this thing called “café” which stands for cultural awareness for everyone. Last year I managed to be on the board and it’s really great because we talked about current events and we talked about how we are similar and how we are different.” (Elena)

This quote demonstrates that being part of an activity as described has, in addition to her experiences, allowed the participant to gain knowledge of various cultures. In contrast, Hannah described the most effective method of gaining acceptance goes beyond the educational institution, while she still is involved in charity events that involves other cultures. This sentiment can be stated within this quote:

“I think media and education can only do so much, you don’t get a firsthand experience. I used to be more involved in community club activities but now I have been busier with exams.” (Hannah)

Hannah put emphasis on the experiences being her primary resource of knowledge of cultural diversity; she is continually immersed in the international community, allowing her to see beyond education. Both participants had some involvement within the school to keep up with diverse cultural activities, but exposure is what really influenced their identity.

Fitting In

Both Camp youth have expressed that because of their unique upbringing they had trouble fitting in with the rest of society. Hannah expressed that a disadvantage to her fluid identity is feeling like an outsider:

“I think sometimes people may have difficulties understanding me and who I am. That can be expected from not fitting in but some people are just never going to accept my values and me because they’re never going to get it.” (Hannah)

This quote put an emphasis on the concept of feeling like an outsider for those with amplitude of international experiences. Elena expressed her lack of fitting in within her own community:

“When I’m in New York, people are kind of judgmental and conservative. When I go to camp or Greece, that side of my family and people there are more out there, liberal.”

While this quote describes a more specific example, it demonstrates that even with the many international experiences, those with a fluid identity may experience the feeling of not “fitting in”. (Elena)

In summary, the themes that emerged throughout the three groups appear to support the two hypotheses. Overall, the groups displayed differences in the methods in which they used education as a resource of knowledge. For example, the Canadian students learned most of their knowledge on diverse cultures through education, whereas the Camp youth in particular through experiences such as travel and interacting with those of diverse cultures. They also displayed differences in terms of how their identity commitment, particularly between the Canadian versus the International and Camp youth. The Canadian youth did seem to have a sense of belonging and national identity, whereas the Camp youth displayed apprehension towards their sense of belonging. And generally, the Camp youth demonstrated different views on their sentiments about how society is progressing. These differences might be due to the participants’ international experiences.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of this comparative study was to explore fluid identity and cultural sensitivity in youth across three population groups; Canadian students, International students and youth who have been to an international summer camp in Switzerland. This mixed methods research study utilized both qualitative and quantitative survey responses in addition to one-on-one interviews. The following discussion will include a reflection on the research hypotheses and consider the findings for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. The first hypothesis examined whether Canadians had a stronger national identity and lower international experiences, which may indicate less cultural sensitivity. Whereas the second hypothesis predicted that International students and Camp youth would have a lower national identity with higher international experiences, leading to more cultural sensitivity than demonstrated by Canadian students. The following section will discuss the appropriate findings, implications for practice, limitations of this study, and future research.

Quantitative

This study found no significant differences for either hypothesis when analyzing the quantitative aspect of the study. The following discussion will focus on interpreting the lack of significance in light of the literature related to these hypotheses. The primary measures of interest (MEIM, CDSA, composite variable) will be considered.

The purpose of the quantitative analysis was to compare the means of each measure using an ANOVA across all three participant groups. The mean scores on the MEIM measure for all three groups were: Canadian mean ($M = 125.14$), International students mean ($M = 121.74$), and Camp youth mean ($M = 123.20$). Even though there is no significant difference, the highest mean is from the Canadian students. It is demonstrated in the literature that those with fewer

international experiences have a stronger identity commitment (Berry & Cameron, 2008; Pham, 2013; Perkins, 2004). Therefore, it was expected that Canadians would have more identity commitment, since it is more likely that they would have fewer international experiences than those who studied abroad or those who attended a summer camp overseas. As the number of participants in this study was limited, future research should focus on recruiting more participants for each group, which may lead to the expected significant differences between the means, as larger numbers are beneficial in increasing the reliability on the reflection of the population mean. In particular, an increase in the International student group may be needed, as the current results showed that Camp youth have more identity commitment, which is contrary to literature (Barker & Moore, 2011; Berry & Cameron, 2008; Fail et al. 2004; Hoersting, & Jenkins, 2011 Perkins, 2004). My number of Canadian participants was higher, which may have an affect on the results being contrary to literature, due to a lack of even groups. The expected results would have been that the Camp youth would have less identity commitment than the International students, as some participants within the Camp youth have expressed themselves as having a fluid identity. Based on qualitative results, International students do have a sense of identity commitment to their home country. Based on literature, International students first gravitate towards their comfort zone of their cultural identity, then later socialize with other locals and other International students (Brown & Brown, 2013 Pham, 2013). Due to these results it is clear that identity is a very complex topic, which is why the term fluid identity is relevant in today's society. Proweller (1999) discussed the psychosocial and cultural implications of identity, integrating both how an individual sees oneself and how one interacts with society at large; meaning the concept of fluid identity is very complex and may be measurable through quantitative research.

The mean scores for the second measure, the CDSA, were also compared across the three groups, and the results were unexpected; the Canadian students' mean ($M = 41.46$), the International students' mean ($M = 38.04$), and the Camp youths' mean ($M = 40.08$). Contrary to the expected hypothesis, Canadians reported the highest mean over the other population groups, although this result was not statistically significant. While still contrary to my hypothesis, the literature states that as Canada is a multicultural country, Canadian students may be exposed to those belonging to diverse cultures without having international experiences, particularly if they come from a city such as Toronto (Galanakis, 2013; Qadeer, 2003, Bunch & Gudaitis, 2008). This may explain why the means were much more similar than expected, and did not support my hypotheses that Canadians will have a high identity commitment and that the other two groups would have higher cultural sensitivity. All my participants have at least been to high school, which may indicate that all participants have at least some cultural awareness. Due to the fact that many Canadian participants may have been exposed to cultural awareness, as in the past decades education in the Canadian schools have a required multicultural curriculum, it is more likely that they would have knowledge on diverse cultures that would be expressed (Cumming, Mackay & Sakyi, 1994; Kim & Dionne, 2014; Howe, 2014; Jean-Pierre & Nunes, 2011).

The results associated with the three composite variables demonstrated no significance. The composite variables were composed of a variety of questions from both measures, which captured aspects of fluid identity (composite variable 1), identity commitment (composite variable 2), and cultural sensitivity (composite variable 3), as defined within the literature. While the means were not statistically different, the number of participants in each group was not equal therefore it may have influenced the means as they would more reliably reflect the population mean. There are 12 more Canadians than International students, and 11 more

Canadians than Camp youth. To increase significance, more participants in each group may be needed to even out the populations.

There was no significant difference when comparing the means between both the Canadian students and the International and Camp groups combined. Here, the difference in the number of participants might have influenced the mean scores, as there were 34 Canadian and 47 International and Camp students.

While a statistical significance was not found when examining the quantitative measures, it is important to note what can be done for future study to strengthen the research, including increasing the participant numbers and ensuring equal numbers of participants within the groups. Despite the lack of statistical significance, the quantitative findings of this study are in line with some of the qualitative findings revealed in this study.

Qualitative

This study found some interesting themes across the three groups within the open-ended questions that were in the on-line *Qualtrics* survey and the interviews. Both of my hypotheses were supported by the emergent themes derived from the voices of my participants. Throughout this discussion, the themes will be examined further in relevance to my hypotheses.

Open-ended Questions

As identified previously in Tables 1–3, emergent themes were identified in the responses of my participants. These themes supported my hypotheses in several ways and will be discussed below. The qualitative responses that were analyzed into these themes emerged out of participant responses to three open-ended questions on the survey. The first question asked participants if they had ever struggled with their identity. The second question explored identity formation further by asking about their sense of identity. The third question focused more on participant's

overall sense of cultural awareness and sensitivity within society.

Identity Commitment and Knowledge of Heritage

Displaying identity commitment and pride was revealed to be a strong theme for Canadians, supporting my first hypothesis that Canadians will report having a strong national identity. Literature discusses that youth who had a strong sense of identity commitment displayed better mental health and well-being (Ajibade, Daryl, Davis, Hook & Utsey, 2016; Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016; Crocetti, Fortanier, Hale, Klimstra & Meeus, 2016). In reference to the literature, it can be noted that identity commitment was used as a protective factor to avoid identity struggles. A Canadian male described being comfortable identifying as Canadian, and that his family comes from eight generations of Canadians; this description is an example of a youth with a strong identity commitment. This is relevant to my first hypothesis as the Canadian participants demonstrated through their open-ended responses that their pride in their Canadian identity gives them a good sense of their identity.

Similarly, Canadian participants frequently mentioned knowledge of heritage, and they said that it allowed them to have a good sense of their identity. A study demonstrated that Canadian youth who are women tend to express more national pride, with a general acceptance on multiculturalism (Berry & Cameron, 2008). A Canadian male participant described his sense of identity, “Yes I do because my mother has done a great job of ensuring I know my cultural heritage”. This quote is indicative of Canadian youth finding significance in their cultural heritage, relating to a lack of fluid identity. The literature and the results from my study support my hypothesis that Canadians will report having a strong national identity.

The following themes will be discussed in relevance to my second hypothesis, stating that those with international experiences will report more fluid identities, and therefore be more

culturally sensitive.

Moving Around The World

Moving is a theme that was most frequently mentioned for those participants who attended summer camp. This supports my second hypothesis referring to third culture kids being more open to diversity. As the literature indicates, third culture kids are very adaptive and are therefore comfortable moving to a new location (Hoersting, & Jenkins, 2011). Furthermore, third culture kids are expected to change and adapt their cultural rules as they moved to a new culture (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). A 24-year-old female states in the question referring to her struggle of identity, “Yes because I have lived away from my “home country” for most of my life”. This quote addresses the self-struggle that third culture kids experience throughout their identity development. Through the analysis of this theme, it has demonstrated that moving globally leads to a fluid identity but also creates more cultural sensitivity because of their experiences.

Cultural Identity

The three groups discussed that their cultural identity had an impact on the development of their identity and, at times, challenged them. The majority of the participants who struggled with their cultural identity belonged to the groups with international experiences, namely the International students and the Camp youth. This is an indicator of the relevance towards my second hypothesis, which discusses that youth with more cultural experiences may have less identity commitment and more cultural sensitivity. The Canadians who described their cultural identity as creating a struggle for their identity development was due to balancing two ethnic and cultural identities, as some of the Canadian students immigrated from another country. An International student discussed not fitting into the Hispanic community due to the colour of her

skin, demonstrating that while having more experiences, her national identity is less strong. The Camp youth, who revealed these issues, discuss the balance between several cultures and not living in their home country, as a challenge culturally. A study discusses the relationship between cultural identity and cultural connectedness and found that youth who tried to combine both cultures together as opposed to living in “two worlds”, had a better understanding of their identity (Lucero, 2014). The study is relevant to these findings as participants felt disconnected culturally when trying to live in two separate identities. Whereas those integrating both cultures into their identities, found that they had a good sense of their identity. Each groups struggled with cultural identity in a different way, as their issues were specific to their own group. This theme supports the hypothesis that the more cultural experiences the participants have, the less identity commitment they may have.

Languages

While the theme was less frequent, the discussion of languages and identity development has significance. A majority of the participants who mentioned language as a challenging aspect of their identity development were International students, due to learning both their national language and the new language. One study supports this hypothesis, and found that youth attending a French International school in Toronto believed that their plurilingual and pluricultural competencies are a strength for their future (Prasad, 2014). In Canada, in all levels of education, global citizenship is promoted; therefore, educators aim for multiculturalism through the education of multilingualism (Guardado, 2012). While learning multiple languages can be a challenge for youth developing an identity, it provides them with enriching experiences. Due to globalization, many of the participants within the study may have been educated in either just English or in multiple languages, creating identity formation difficulties. A male Camp

youth described his experience as follows, “When moving from Caracas, Venezuela to Miami it was difficult to find a new identity within an entire different set of cultural values and customs. Not speaking a language”. This quote identifies that some participants made the connection between identity formation difficulties and language barriers, supporting my second hypotheses that those with international experiences have less national/cultural identity and more cultural sensitivity.

Values

While all three participant groups indicated that having a good understanding of their values aided them in having a good sense of their identity, participants within both the International students and the Camp youth put a high importance on values. Consider the Camp youth who identified herself as a third culture kid; she described that her knowledge of her international customs, cultures, and values gave her a better understanding of the world. “I’ve been exposed to so many different things- international cultures, customs and values, that my identity and understanding of the world is like many other third culture kids...” stated a Camp youth. Moreover, a study demonstrated that third culture kids displaying a high self-efficacy also had less difficulties adapting and making friends (Ittel & Sisler, 2012). This study supports my hypothesis and findings that those with more international experiences, specifically third culture kids, put less of an importance on national identity but more so on values. Further research can be done by recruiting more third culture kids in particular to the study, and examining values in relation to identity.

Exposure

Exposure is an important theme for the first two questions that focused on identity formation for gaining a good sense of one’s own identity and a method of gaining global cultural

acceptance. For all three groups, exposure to diverse cultures was a recurring theme, particularly among those with international experiences, as they have experienced cultural exposure in travel and other life experiences. Research suggests that more intergroup contact and exposure will lead to more cultural acceptance (Aydogan & Gonsalkorale, 2015; Bakkan, Isaksen, Jakobsen & Skavhaug, 2016; Deegan, Dovidio, Gaertner & Hehman, 2015; Page-Gould, Major & Mendes, 2010). Based on research, it can be noted that youth with more international experiences and exposure may be more culturally sensitive, therefore supporting my hypothesis. Many of the Camp youth participants have experiences with a variety of cultures because of travel opportunities and living abroad. Additionally, the International participants have at least been exposed to two cultures, “I embrace part of the Chinese culture that I have been exposed to growing up, as well as my British side from living in the UK”.

Unexpected Themes

There were themes that emerged within my open-ended questions that I had not anticipated. These themes are career identity, gender identity and media. They are unexpected themes as they do not directly relate to my hypotheses but have a significant effect on the participants in the areas of identity struggle and increasing cultural sensitivity globally. The importance of these unexpected findings will be discussed in connection to the literature and my other findings.

Career Identity

Career is a theme, which came up frequently for the first question. Participants discussed several topics, which involved them discovering their professional identity. For example, a 19-year-old female youth stated, “yes when figuring out my career path,” and while not relevant to my hypotheses, this theme is very interesting considering education is a commonality between my participants. All of my participants who are not minors are attending or have attended

university, and the minors are currently in high school. It can be said that through education, my participants have received knowledge of diverse cultures. According to a Canadian study, immigrant youth experienced the complexity of social pressures but also career pressures put on by their parents, and in result regretted their educational choices (Krahn & Taylor, 2014). This study demonstrated the complexity of the topic of fluid identity, involving many aspects of identity such as cultural, ethnic, gender, social, and career. While career was not part of either of my hypotheses, it is interesting that regardless of culture, career development is a struggle all youth can identify with. For future research, gathering participants who have not necessarily received that quality of education may be beneficial for collecting more effective results.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is another unexpected theme that came up throughout my first question asking my participants if they struggled with their identity. The topic was discussed throughout a couple of topics such as gender development and sexual orientation. Both comments were made from Canadian students. Literature discusses that the LGBTQ youth are the most vulnerable, as their identity is very complex; taken that into account since 2014, there have been more support available for them in the greater Toronto area (Canada, 2014). Transgender youth also struggle with their identity as they have an internal sense of being and their outer sense of being (Brzuzy et al., 2012). It can be presumed that fluid identity is more than just factors involving culture and ethnicity, but also gender. With that it can be suggested that Canadian youth feel comfortable enough to discuss these identity development issues more than my other population groups. Due to many community resources are available for those belonging to the LGBTQ community in Canada, these resources may allow for Canadian youth to feel more comfortable (Greig, Liboro,

Munro, St. John, Travers, & Schneider, 2014).

Media

Lastly, media was an unexpected theme, but significant as many participants described that if the media were to change there would be an increase in cultural acceptance in the world. With the world of events in the past decade, this theme is significant to highlight as a factor in which youth may not be as culturally tolerant. Banda suggests that minority sensitive media would create a more recognition of minorities and create a more positive representation (2015). This is an interesting finding as it suggests that the media may have an influence on cultural sensitivity.

Overall, the open-ended questions revealed some interesting themes, which support this study's two main research hypotheses. The first and the second open-ended questions allowed the participants to express their sentiments on their sense of identity, whereas the last question gave insight into what possible methods would assist individuals to be more globally accepting. Additionally, the study included six interviews, which allowed participants to discuss their feelings and cultural experiences, highlighting associated topics of identity and cultural sensitivity.

Interviews

The results from the interviews also supported my hypotheses, through a variety of themes. I had two interviews with participants from each of the three groups; the Canadian students, the International students, and Camp youth. The two Canadians who participated in the interviews were both close in age, but of different genders, both attending teachers college in September. The two International students, both male, were in the same field at Brock University, however one is an undergraduate and one is a graduate student. Of the two Camp

youth, both female, the older youth finished high school this school year and the other finished ninth grade. The older youth identifies as a third culture kid and the other balances both of her parents' cultural identities. Despite some characteristic differences, similarities did occur which emerged in some interesting themes. The following discussion will be separated by hypothesis. The first hypothesis predicts that Canadian students will have a strong national and/or cultural identity and fewer international experiences. There are several emergent themes that occurred throughout the Canadian interviews that are relevant to my hypothesis.

Education

For all participants, education was a significant factor as they had all been well educated. Particularly for the Canadian youth, education is where they gained cultural knowledge. Within the past 40 years teacher education has changed, where multicultural teacher development is required and therefore teachers are obliged to communicate and teach racial acceptance, multiculturalism, and global citizenship (Howe, 2014). Based on the literature, it can be noted that the Canadian interviewees, despite not having the international experiences, still had global awareness through education.

Stereotypes

The theme of stereotypes was mostly displayed by the Canadian youth during the interviews. They discussed instances where their friends would be mocked due to cultural characteristics in these particular instances, for being Jewish for one participant and the other participant for his/her Polish ethnic identity. Seidner (1976) found that Polish American immigrants experienced negative stereotyping when settling in the United States. Due to the lack of cultural experiences of the American youth, they base their perspectives on stereotypes. While an older study, it supports the hypothesis by displaying that due to lack of international

experiences, Canadians may perceive those of diverse cultures using stereotypes. The second hypothesis examines if International students and Camp youth will report more fluid identities, and will therefore display higher cultural sensitivity due to more international experiences. Some themes emerged from the interviews with both the International students and the Camp youth.

Education

As opposed to the Canadian students, the youth with international experiences saw education as a social outlet. Many were involved in extracurricular activities, which involved youth of other cultures, and created relationships with youth of different cultural identities. According to researcher Aidoo (2012), International students are more open to interaction with youth of diversity, as opposed to the American students in the study. Based off of the literature, a link can be made between youth with international experiences displaying more cultural sensitivity. Therefore, the theme of education supports my hypothesis, as relationships with those of diverse cultures is of interest to those youth with more international experiences.

Identity Commitment

For the International students, they felt a sense of commitment towards their home country, since that is where many of the students' beliefs and values came from originally. While contrary to my hypothesis, it is important to note that while International students have multiple international experiences, they still have a strong sense of their national identity. Based on the literature, a study on fourth year students from the Caribbean suggests that they have a strong attachment to their Caribbean identity and commit to their cultural traditions while attending University in Florida (Malcolm, 2011). The theme does not support my hypothesis, potentially due to the home country of the participants, as Israel and India are both prideful countries. Research by Giladi (2015) indicated that the historical events and religious aspects of Israel give

Israelis pride in their country. Authors found that American Indian adolescents frequently participated in cultural activities to keep up with their cultural practices (Soto, Baezconde-Garbanati, Schwartz & Unger, 2015). Past research demonstrates that these cultures in particular have a strong commitment to their identity. For future research, interviewing participants of a variety of national identities might give a more global perspective towards identity commitment and identity exploration of International students.

Fitting In

As opposed to the International students, the Camp youth felt disconnected from their home country and sometimes had difficulties fitting in with the majority. One interviewee is a third culture kid and the other interviewee feels disconnected due to her vast international experiences and Greek cultural identity. Youth put a significant importance on the relationships and perception their peers have of them, however they find themselves having different interests, creating a lack of sense of belonging and difficulties fitting in (Ressler, 2015). This theme is supporting in the hypothesis, as a third culture kids experience less identity commitment, resulting in a struggle to fitting in.

Exposure

As opposed to the other groups, education was not a main source of cultural experiences; but instead, exposure to other cultures was a key factor. As researcher Ressler (2015) discovered, due to multiple cultural exposures, that third culture kids are able to be comfortable with those of different cultures. While exposure to other cultures was a theme for both International students and Camp youth in relation to where they learned about diversity, it is interesting to note that literature argues that it has a significant influence for third culture kids. From both the literature and the results it can be discussed that the theme of exposure is in support of this study's second

hypothesis.

Unexpected Themes

White Privilege

When discussing with my Canadian participants if they felt like their identity gave them an advantage, both of them referred to being Caucasian, and how in society that gives an individual privilege. Based on the literature, white privilege awareness is effective in improving attitudes towards those of difference between individuals (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, Philips & Denney, 2012). Intertwining the literature and results, it can be presumed that having awareness of one's identity and associated advantages can create more cultural acceptance.

Overall, the themes that occurred throughout the interviews supported both of my hypotheses with some unexpected themes. These themes demonstrate that there are differences between the population groups when it comes to identity exploration and identity commitment in addition to cultural sensitivity.

Limitations and Future Directions

In terms of methodology, using self-report measures to determine cultural diversity and identity might be one limitation. As a result, levels of cultural sensitivity and identity are merely based on the student's perspective. It is possible that most of the participants overestimated their scores on both the MEIM and the CDSA, as opposed to their actual experience (Guerard, Harvey, Hernandez, Omachonu & Sen, 2015). Additionally, during a self-reported survey it is difficult to remain unbiased when answering questions, particularly with a sensitive topic such as race, discrimination, and cultural acceptance. Despite that, self-reported methods are selected methods among researchers when examining personal identity and cultural sensitivity, and are also shown to be reliable. However, for future research it may be beneficial for stronger data to

gain more participants who have lived in a small town, where they are exposed to fewer individuals of diverse cultures.

Several participants did not complete both measures or did not complete the measure in its entirety; as a result those participants were not included in the analysis. The decrease in numbers may have had an impact on the statistical significance of the quantitative methods. Participants may have been too tired to complete the survey. For future research, more participants would increase the potential for statistical significance.

All participants of my survey are university or high school educated and are assumed to have an adequate knowledge of cultural diversity. Additionally, those participants who attended an international summer camp in Switzerland were recruited through word of mouth; therefore those youth may have done my survey because they vaguely know the student researcher. For future direction, having a broader population sample would strengthen the study. As there can be more fluid identity seen in third culture kids, gathering more participants who identify as third culture kids could strengthen the results.

The researcher had some level of rapport with the majority of the participants who consented to participate in the interviews. The benefit to the rapport with the interviewees is that they were eager to engage in the interview and disclosed a lot of information. However, the disadvantage is that they may have been only disclosing information that displays their positive side when it comes to the topic of cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity (i.e., a social desirability effect).

Canada as a whole is known to be a very multicultural country; therefore it may have influenced my results, particularly within the context of being in a larger city (Zerebeski, 2015). Taking this into account, having participants from a smaller city or a more Northern city may

have given results that would better support my hypotheses. Within larger cities in Canada, there is a larger population of diversity, even within the Niagara region there is a large population of Italian immigrants. Whereas, in smaller towns in Canada, such as Trenton, there is more of a unity of the Canadian individuals (Canada's multicultural society today, 2012).

Lastly, the topic in itself, fluid identity, does not have a large quantity of research due to the uniqueness and complexity of the topic. Makalela (2014) discussed the construction of the fluid identity in relation to multilingual spaces and concluded that more research is needed on the topic. This study is relevant to mine, as language was one of the aspects of identity formation that some youth had struggled with. Additionally, language is a part of one's identity, which indicates that there are many factors of identity formation. As Yon (2000) states perfectly, "The complexity of identity work in these portraits also tells us something about the difficulty of separating the dynamics of race, ethnicity and popular culture... The culture is racialized but is it not always fixed in bodies and therefore racial identities are also made more open." (2000, Yon, p. 154). As he discussed, defining identities is more complex, particularly since there are multiple facets to identity such as race, ethnicity, language, and more. As identity is complex and challenging to separate, categorizing identity as fluid gives those a sense of belonging. The desire for society to create an exposed identity indicates that there is a desire for youth to be stable and classify themselves with a particular identity. Therefore, even if one does not fit into a structured identity, classifying fluid identity as a valid identity may aide an individual's sense of belonging.

Conclusion and Implications

Due to the unique context of fluid identity, this thesis provides several implications for educators and individuals globally. In a school environment, it is significant for teachers and

professors to become knowledgeable about cultural sensitivity and the disadvantages and advantages associated with youth who hold a more fluid identity. For those supportive figures interacting with youth, this study will give them a better understanding of the youth themselves and be able to give support when desired. It is important for those working as counselors for youth to understand that third culture kids may have a poor mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and general psychological distress (Hoban & Purnell, 2014). Moreover, studies display the healthy immigrant paradox, where international students integrated even more than the natives (Fong, 2008). Therefore it may be beneficial for those counselor figures to have a good comprehension of the disadvantages and advantages that may come with holding a more fluid identity. These supportive figures could be teachers, parents, an older sibling, or older peers.

In conclusion, the goal of the current study was to examine cultural identity among youth, specifically their fluid identity in more depth, particularly by exploring cultural sensitivity through three population groups. The qualitative findings showed that in this study the Canadian youth reported having a strong identity and weaker international experiences. Whereas youth with more international experiences, International students and youth who have attended an international summer camp in Switzerland, reported having higher international experiences, higher cultural sensitivity, and lower national identity and identity commitment. The quantitative findings did not show statistical significance in this present study; the one-way ANOVA, the composite variable ANOVA and the t-test that combined participants with and without international experiences. Interestingly, however, the qualitative aspect of my study did demonstrate some interesting findings throughout the open-ended questions and the interviews. Some interesting findings within the open-ended questions emerged, such as cultural identity creating a struggle during identity formation, whereas religiosity was considered a protective

factor. Youth as a whole reported that they believed that education is one of the main resources that may lead to societal global acceptance of different cultures. Within the interviews, themes between the Canadian participants' education was a common resource for their knowledge on multiculturalism. The International students reported identity commitment within their interviews but also much more interaction with those of diverse cultures. Whereas the Camp youth had difficulties fitting into society, but demonstrated knowledge and sensitivity towards those of diverse cultures due to their international experiences. Due to the complexity of the present study topic, fluid identity, it is important to note that while some tests did not directly find statistical significance, there are many factors encompassing fluid identity influencing the results. Future research should continue to examine these youth with a fluid identity, in order to have a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the cultural lifestyle they have.

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Appendix 1 - Online Survey

Part A: Demographics

Please complete the following questions about your background.

1. Please indicate your gender.

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other: _____

2. How old are you?

3. What is your mother's occupation?

4. What is your father's occupation?

5. Do you have any siblings?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. If you have siblings, please list the ages and gender of your siblings.

Example: 14 yrs girl

Sibling 1: _____

Sibling 2: _____

Sibling 3: _____

Sibling 4: _____

Sibling 5: _____

Sibling 6: _____

7. Please list the city and country you are currently living in.

Example: Toronto, Canada

8. What country were you born in?

9. What country was your mother born in?

10. What country was your father born in?

Part B: Identity

1. What national identity do you identify yourself with?

- a. North American
- b. Latin American
- c. European
- d. Asian
- e. Oceanian
- f. Other

2. Do your parents identify themselves as the same national identity as you do?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Yes, mom does
- d. Yes, father does

3. Has a member of your family within three generations immigrated to a different country?

- a. Yes, my generation
- b. Yes, my parents generation
- c. Yes, my grandparents were immigrants
- d. Yes, but beyond the 3rd generation
- e. No one in my family was an immigrant

4. Have you ever lived in a country other than that of your citizenship?

- a. Yes, once
- b. Yes, twice
- c. Yes, 3 times
- d. More than 3 times
- e. No, I have not

5. Do you consider yourself as belonging to a religious affiliation, if so which one?

- a. Buddhist
- b. Christian
- c. Catholic
- d. Hindu
- e. Jewish
- f. Muslim
- g. Other

h. Atheist

Part C: Interaction with people who have a fluid identity (may click more than one)

1. Have you ever had a friend who was adopted?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain, but I was adopted
- d. Abstain from the question

2. Have you ever had a friend who lived abroad?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain, but I have lived abroad
- d. Abstain from the question

3. Do you know of anyone in your circle of friends who speaks more than one language?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Yes, I speak more than one language
- d. Abstain from the question

4. Do you know of anyone who identifies as transgender?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain, but I am transgender
- d. Abstain from the question

5. Have you ever had a friend who is transracial (an individual who identifies with two or more racial identities)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain, but I am transracial
- d. Abstain from the question

6. Do you have any friends who are 1st generation immigrants (someone born in one country then moved to an other)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Uncertain, but I am a 1st generation immigrant
- d. Abstain from the question

Part D: Interest and Awareness of Multiculturalism

1. When travelling which of the following do you believe is the most important to experience?
 - a. Eating the typical cultural dish of that country
 - b. Sightseeing
 - c. Shopping
 - d. Talking to the individuals of the country
 - e. I do not travel much

2. Do you take interest in learning new languages?
 - a. Yes, I do
 - b. I would like to but it is hard to learn at my age
 - c. No, I'd rather just speak my mother tongue

3. Do you feel that people today are overall more tolerant to people of different cultures?
 - a. Yes, I believe that multicultural diversity and tolerance has increased recently
 - b. Yes, but I believe some regions in the world still need to improve on being more accepting towards people of different cultures
 - c. No, I believe people globally were more tolerant towards different cultures in the past
 - d. I believe the tolerant level towards people of different cultures has remained the same

4. What is the best way that individuals where you live can improve on their levels of acceptance towards people of different cultures?
 - a. By talking to them
 - b. By learning about different cultures in school
 - c. Watching TV shows that display multiculturalism (i.e. North of Sixty; Little Mosque on the Prairie)
 - d. Other (Please type below what you mean by other)

Part D: Open Ended Questions

Please share your thoughts on the following questions.

1. Do you believe that you have a good sense of your identity? Please explain in what ways.

2. Have you ever struggled with developing your identity? Please explain in what ways.

3. How do you think our world can start to accept more people who are from different cultures?

Part E: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or *ethnic groups* that people come from. Some examples of ethnic groups are Latino, African American, Mexican, Asian American, Chinese, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____
Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(5) Strongly agree (4) Agree (3) Neutral (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

- 1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____
- 2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. _____
- 3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. _____
- 4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own _____
- 5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. _____
- 6. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. _____
- 7. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together _____

8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life. _____
9. I often spent time with people of other ethnic groups other than my own _____
10. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group _____
11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group _____
12. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. _____
13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to others about my ethnic background. _____
14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments _____
15. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups. _____
16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music or customs. _____
17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups. _____
18. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. _____
19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____

Part F: Cultural Diversity Self-Assessment

Read each statement and circle the number that best describes your behavior or belief. Remember, be as candid as possible with your responses, there are no right or wrong answers.

	Almost Never		Some times		Always
1. I am aware of my own biases and how they affect my thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can honestly assess my strengths and weaknesses in the area of diversity and try to improve myself.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I assume good intent and ask for clarification when I don't understand what was said or implied.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I challenge others when they make	1	2	3	4	5

racial/ethnic/sexually offensive comments or jokes.					
5. I speak up if I witness another person being humiliated or discriminated against.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I do not participate in jokes that are derogatory to any individual group.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I don't believe that my having a friend of colour means that I'm culturally competent.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I understand why a lack of diversity in my social circle may be perceived as excluding others.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I realize that people of other cultures have a need to support one another and connect as a group.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I do not make assumptions about a person or individual group until I have verified the facts on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I have multiple friends from a variety of ethnicities and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I connect easily with people who do not look like me and am able to communicate easily.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I'm interested in the ideas and beliefs of people who don't think and believe as I do, and I respect their opinions even when I disagree.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I work to make sure people who are different from me are heard and accepted.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I recognize and avoid language that reinforces stereotypes ("jew them down on the price").	1	2	3	4	5
16. I know the stereotype of my ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I encourage culturally diverse people to speak out on their issues and concerns and validate their issues.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Avoid assuming that others will have the same reaction as me when discussing or viewing an issue.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I understand that I'm a product of my upbringing and believe there are valid beliefs other than my own.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I do not take physical characteristics into account when interacting with others and when making decisions about competence or ability.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I recognize that others stereotype me and I try to overcome their perceptions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I include culturally diverse people in team decision making processes that impact	1	2	3	4	5

them.					
23. I actively seek opportunities to connect with people different than me and seek to build rapport.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I believe “colour blindness” is counter-productive and devalues a person’s culture or history.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I avoid generalizing behaviors or attitudes of one individual group to another group (“All men are...” or “All Asians act...” or “Handicapped people usually...”).	1	2	3	4	5
26. I actively convey that nontraditional employees or students are as skilled and competent as others.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I do not try to justify acts of discrimination to make the victim feel better. I validate his/her assessment of what occurred.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I try to learn about and appreciate the richness of other cultures and honour their holidays and events.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I believe there are policies and practices in place that negatively impact people outside the majority culture.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I understand the definition of internalized racism and how it impacts people of colour.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I believe that race is a social construct, not a scientific fact.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I know and accept that a person’s experiences and background impacts how they interact and trust me.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

At the beginning of the interview I will introduce myself to the participant and they will introduce themselves to me, and get to know each other briefly. Then I will follow by showing them the consent form and allowing them to sign it if they still want to participate. If they are under the age of 18 at this point their legal guardian will still be there with them during the introduction and review of signed consent forms. I will remind the participants that their participation is voluntary and that they should only answer questions they are comfortable answering. I will go over confidentiality and that only I will see the raw data and that I will be using pseudonyms during analysis. Finally I will define some important terms then proceed with the interview.

1. In what way have you spent time figuring out about your own identity? Example- A Jewish individual may connect more with their identity by going to Israel

2. Are you involved in activities that include individuals who have a different identity than yours, or you would rather be involved with individuals with the same identity?

If yes, what kind of activities?

3. In what ways did you learn about different cultures other than your own?

4. Do you think that your ethnicity and cultural background gives you advantages or disadvantages and which ones?

5. Has someone in your friend group ever felt upset by something they heard in regard to their identity? If so please explain what was said and how it made you feel?

6. Do you think more people are more accepting of other now than they have been in the past? If so, how are they?

7. What factors do you think influence the way youth views others of different cultures than their own? Example: Youth may be influenced by the TV shows they watch

8. In what ways do you believe that being exposed to different cultures than that of your own benefits you as an individual?

i.e: international summer camps, travel, etc.

Appendix 3 – Brock University Ethics Clearance



Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: 3/28/2016
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: ZINGA, Dawn - Child and Youth Studies
FILE: 15-228 - ZINGA
TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Claudia Nijsten
SUPERVISOR: Dawn Zinga
TITLE: Fluid Identity and Cultural Sensitivity in Youth

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW Expiry Date: 3/31/2017

The Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 3/28/2016 to 3/31/2017.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 3/31/2017. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.


To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at <http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms>.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

- a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
- c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
- d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:



Kimberly Maich, Chair
Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.