# KOREAN STUDENT CONCEPTIONS OF EXPERIENCES AT AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN SOUTH KOREA

by

Shaun Michael Marsh

A Dissertation
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of
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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the participants in the study who were willing to share their experiences despite apprehensions about their importance to this study, or their ability to communicate in English. It is further dedicated to education practitioners who take the risk of being involved in transnational initiatives, with the hope that this study will provide insight on the experiences of students who pursue their education in a distinctive, and often misunderstood context.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge all the remarkable people that have befriended and supported me in my global foray, which began in 2002. This includes my entire family, friends near and far, and the professors and employers who have taken notice of my interests and nurtured my personal development as a both an educator and an individual.

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I would like to thank the faculty and administration at George Mason University Korea for granting access to their institution for this study, and my dissertation committee members for directing me to resources and experiences that allowed me to connect with the institution and design a study.

Finally, I would like to thank all the adult students and faculty I have worked with in South Korea for recognizing my potential as an educator and for showing me the importance of continued learning and professional development. Your passion for lifelong learning directly influenced my decision to pursue graduate education and refine my skills as both an instructor and self-directed learner.

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## List of Abbreviations

American Psychological Association ..... APA
Certified Public Accountant ..... CPA
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ..... FERPA
Institutional Review Board ..... IRB
Intercultural Development Inventory ..... IDI
Membership Training ..... MT
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ..... OECD
Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics ..... STEM
Test of English as a Foreign Language ..... TOEFL
Test of English for International Communication ..... TOEIC
Test of English Proficiency ..... TEPS
Transnational Branch Campus ..... TNBC
Transnational Education ..... TNE
United States ..... US
University of New South Wales ..... UNSW

## Abstract

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George Mason University, 2018

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In this dissertation, I explored the conceptions of Korean university students to understand their development of student self-identity while they were enrolled at a North American university branch campus in South Korea. The campus is one of many Transnational Branch Campuses (TNBCs) that have recently opened around the globe, and this study provides a qualitative description of student experience in the crucial first-year transition period. I used phenomenography, making full use of interviews to understand the circumstances and interactions of students at the campus, and to explore their goals and experiences. I ensured trustworthiness for the selected methodology through a multistep process of identifying themes, making comparative analyses, forming categories, and creating an outcome space. My objective was to elicit student conceptions of their interactions at a TNBC, generate a practical and theory-based resource for practitioners in transnational educational contexts based on student conceptions, and suggest topics for further research. I found through the analyses that students have three

comprehensive, categorized conceptions of experience at a TNBC which are crossed by six variations. The findings illustrate the conceptions of Korean students at a TNBC and provide insight for further research and TNBC development.

# Chapter One

Through this study, I explored the conceptions of first-year university students on their development of student self-identity through interactions with peers, faculty, and administration, and their experiences transitioning to a North American university branch campus in their native country of South Korea, hereon referred to as Korea. Transnational branch campuses (TNBCs) are defined in this study as the overseas branches of postsecondary institutions that offer a degree in the name of the institution that is equivalent to the degree received by students at the home institution, and the terms North American and United States (U.S.) are used interchangeably. Students from the country hosting the branch campus are referred to as host country students in this study, because they are typically not citizens or legal residents of the country of the home campus, and their enrollment does not confer citizenship or legal residency in the home country of the university. Except where faculty and students are separately referred to as international faculty or international students, the term internationals is used to describe anyone not from the host country, who is enrolled or employed at a TNBC. The key focus of the study is a descriptive analysis of the participants' conceptions of their experiences interacting within their environment and their processes of understanding what it means to be a degree earning student at a North American institution outside of North America. The first chapter is divided into four sections that outline the inquiry. The background of

the problem is first, followed by terminology used in the study and subsequent report. The third section is a statement of the problem, followed by an analysis of the research site where the phenomenon occurs, and the research questions.

**Background and Importance**

Higher Education has been undergoing a trend in recent years of increasing global engagement. The intensification in development of TNBCs is an aspect of this recent and accelerating shift in higher education in which universities expand globally and deliver services and curriculum to an international academic market (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). The articulated reasons for pursuing transnational initiatives vary from institution to institution, but they typically revolve around a similar set of motivations. Some of the intentions include providing opportunities to students interested in foreign higher education programs who might find studying in their own country more convenient than to travel abroad for an extensive amount of time (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lane, 2011a; Lien & Wang, 2012) and to open new research and development opportunities for faculty and scholars (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Researchers, however, also contend that the primary purposes of opening branch campuses may be for institutions to increase enrollments and market the institutional brand (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Hoyt & Howell, 2012) and to seek additional revenue to make up for shortfalls in funding (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). Some researchers (e.g., Altbach, 2010; Hoyt & Howell, 2012; Lane, 2011b) have stated that not enough is known about branch campuses or why they were established.

The outcomes of efforts to open TNBCs are generally unpredictable and depend greatly on the reception and levels of interest and engagement from stakeholders and potential collaborators. However, the successes of some transnational enterprises have inspired a drive for many institutions to make similar attempts, in what has often proven to be a costly and formidable endeavor (Farrugia & Lane, 2013). Regardless of their individual outcomes, the rapid expansion of the concept of TNBCs represents a contemporary innovation in higher education which theoretically precipitates the possibility of a new global educational paradigm.

I conducted this study under the assumption that the full scope of TNBCs is at present still underestimated or not fully realized. TNBCs possess the potential to increase and offer alternative avenues of dissemination of knowledge between learners and scholars of differing nationalities; enhance global awareness, appreciation, and competence; and eventually increase access to information to prompt further global ventures beyond the current realm of higher education. The expressed intent of entrepreneurial scholars and administrators who foster transnational education, regardless of their individual or personal motives, often reflects a forward-thinking conceptualization of an increasingly interdependent global way of life (Cabrera & Unruh, 2012; Wildavsky, 2014). However, political and economic uncertainty coupled with inequity, conflict, and social stratification tends to obstruct the potential of institutional internationalization efforts (Stearns, 2008).

I believe extensive research performed with the purpose to explore universities' global engagement initiatives will provide substance to rationales offered by institutions

about their own internationalization efforts and help develop practices that attend to the needs of learners. For initiatives to be aligned with student learning and growth, it is critical to engage with students on how they identify themselves in relation to what they experience, and why they enroll and engage with the TNBC. Host country students who enroll at a TNBC will inevitably interact with foreign university cultures, lifestyles of both the foreign and host country students and faculty at their branch institution, and cultures of their own nation, their communities, and with their families. They will also seek to make meaning of the status of being an international student in their own land. Students at a TNBC gain advantages provided by otherwise less accessible foreign institutions, such as a perceived competitive Western degree, foreign language experience, and intercultural interaction (Healey & Michael, 2015; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Wilkins, 2011; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012a). Students and their families are also likely to anticipate and realize unique benefits from a TNBC, such as affordability and less distance between family members than if the students were to study abroad.

However, there is concern about educational quality and difficulties with intercultural interaction (Gopal, 2011; Lemke-Wescott, 2013). It is necessary for TNBC developers, faculty, and administrators to understand how students interact with the TNBC environment and with others in the TNBC environment to determine how improvements can be made (Lemke-Wescott, 2013), and how a global higher education system could be equitable, accessible, and beneficial to students, families, and host country communities. Thus, an aim of this study was to understand how students at a

North American university campus in another nation conceptualize the nature of their interactions.

Higher education professionals can make significant contributions to the meaningful development of TNBCs, similarly to how professionals have tried to adapt U.S. institutions to non-traditional students, commuters, distance learners, and underrepresented populations in their home country. Problems that have arisen in the administration of TNBCs are not dissimilar to some of the challenges that have confronted higher education in the past, such as how to increase access and improve quality of services despite limited resources, how to increase efficiency through organizational change, and how to foster engaging environments that encourage student loyalty and community support. To respond to issues and evolving understandings of the university, student affairs professionals along with faculty have developed standards and explored holistic approaches that contribute to student success (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical lens for this study is the human ecology model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993), which is applicable to the study of student development. In higher education, human ecology is a theory where students' interactions with their environmental cultures and contexts stimulate student identity formation and development (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). Human ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) is less concerned with outcomes but is focused on the nature of interactions and processes of development as they occur through interactions in

context (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). The human ecology model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) is analogous to the university, because universities are functioning organizations and comprised of communities in which information is shared, and where processes and interactions occur. Human ecosystems consist of the ecological terms of organisms, populations, interactions, interdependence, conception, organization, and technology (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). These terms and theories are pertinent to understanding TNBCs through the human ecology model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bubolz and Sontag (1993), but Table 1 indicates the language of human ecology that best represents this study's ecological model of a TNBC. My specific focus was on the interactions within this ecosystem, and how and why students formed their identity in a unique institutional context. Thus, I will next introduce student identity development and culture.

Table 1

*Terms for a Human Ecology Model of TNBCs*

| Term | Definition | Applicability to TNBCs |
|---|---|---|
| Space | A "three-dimensional expanse in which events, actions, and processes occur" (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993, p. 430). Space influences all aspects and processes of the ecosystem. | The TNBC and its facilities are the physical space. The TNBC is where students, faculty, and staff interact and utilize and share services and resources. |
| Organism | A "living system" (p. 430) that is part of a family, or community. | At a TNBC, this is the system of faculty, administration, and students who interact to facilitate processes such as learning and personal development. |
| Population | An impermanent and space-bound group of individuals. | The individuals involved as a collective comprise the population(s) at a TNBC. |
| Interaction | "A process whereby a change or action in one part of the ecosystem induces a change in another part" (p. 430). | TNBCs involve processes of exchange and reciprocal action that occur between individuals in the system. Interaction occurs between students, faculty, and administration. |
| Interdependence | The reliance of individuals on each other, or one part of the system on another. Resources, family, and environment are all interdependent. | All the members of the TNBC rely on other members for knowledge, friendship, achievement, social support, and other necessities determined by their context. |
| Perception | The selective processing of stimuli in the environment, and how it is understood culturally and individually. | Everyone at a TNBC has their own perception of what a TNBC is, how it operates, and what it should be. Students make meaning through their experiences. |

| Term | Definition | Applicability to TNBCs |
|---|---|---|
| Organization | The way in which processes are structured. Refers to how interdependent humans achieve objectives and adapt to an ever-changing environment. | The relationships in a TNBC are a means and structure of achieving goals and conditions. The TNBC structure is a means of enhancement. |

Note. Definitions are paraphrased from Bubolz and Sontag (1993, p. 430-431).

**Student Identity**

Student identity formation might take on a dissimilar quality when it occurs in a mixed cultural ecosystem in a different country (Chapman & Pyvis, 2006; Hofstede, 1986). Students at a branch campus might have different expectations and conceptualizations of their experience than they would at a domestic campus or another country's campus abroad. Thus, student identity is explored throughout this study with the premise that culture, to some degree, is an underlying and omnipresent aspect of a Korean student's experience at a North American university campus in Korea. The ultimate purpose of this study was to identify and explore the conceptions of host country students regarding the TNBC experience, their goals, how they interacted at the institution, how their experiences aligned with their goals, and their conceptions of how their identity had evolved. This knowledge will be useful in better understanding how a rapidly growing number of global institutions can respond to the cultures of students and the host country communities where the campuses are opened, and programs offered, and consequently how programs can be adapted to student needs in another country without compromising their quality or integrity. It is possible the student experiences in this study could be compared with the experiences of students elsewhere in similar contexts, and to

uncover gaps in the TNBC and U.S. higher education experiences. I define terms related to identity below and discuss student identity further in Chapter Two.

**Developmental Tendencies of Branch Campuses**

A TNBC of a North American postsecondary institution will most often be set up to function similarly to its home institution (Chee, Butt, Wilkins, & Ong, 2016). However, because there are great physical distances between the locations of home institutions and their TNBCs, it is unlikely a TNBC would function in wholly the same way as a branch campus in a nearby region of the home institution might. It could even operate differently and only maintain the name and trademarks of the home institution.

Compared with non-Western institutions in literature, North American universities are generally considered to be egalitarian, competitive, more individualist than collective, centered on critical thinking and direct engagement with faculty and administration, and markedly concerned with fostering academic integrity and student citizenship (Baba & Hosoda, 2004; Chen, 1999; Robinson, 1992; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Further, universities in the U.S. are often distinguished by their accessibility, diverse range of educational opportunities, and extensive assortment of learning delivery methods, graduate schools and departmental systems (Dirks, 2016; Horowitz, 1987; Parsons & Platt, 1975; Thelin, 2011). Much of higher education around the world has a common foundation in Western models, but in any given society is also a product of unique historical, political, economic, and cultural developments (Altbach, 1998; Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Postsecondary institutions are thus often designed or transitioned to meet specific local or regional demands (Altbach, 1998;

Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). It is likely, then, that the branch campus of a university in another country will have to adapt to the local culture and conditions in the host country to be successful (Lane, 2011b).

Even within the U.S., where many of the students at branch campuses are nontraditional, adult, and commuter students, regional cultures where branches are located can influence a different campus culture to evolve from that of the home institution (Hoyt & Howell, 2012; Mindrup, 2012). For example, Wolfe and Strange (2003) shared participants' sentiments that a dominant masculine campus culture developed among students and faculty at a branch campus located in a more rural and conservative part of a U.S. state than its home campus. Branch campuses within the U. S. also tend to adopt institutional policies, programs, and cultures from the home institution, but to varying degrees (Dengerink, 2009). Types of branch campuses within the U.S. can differ in structure and administration, from different campuses of the same institution connected by a centralized system, to the branch campus breaking off and rebranding itself into a new institution, such as California State University at Channel Islands (Dengerink, 2009). In the latter case, causes may include the influence of host country legislations on the branch campus, or the community of a branch feeling a sense of ownership of their local campus (Dengerink, 2009). The outcomes of branch campuses within the same country as the home campus are affected by differences and separation from the home campus, which naturally implies that branch campuses abroad might also be influenced in a similar way.

The complexities of culture are exacerbated at a TNBC (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015; Wood, 2011). Hofstede (1986) highlighted differences in how societies tend to perceive educational institutions in relation to other units in society. Some of the differences mentioned by Hofstede (1986) are that higher education in many countries only reinforces privilege rather than prosperity, and that the state may have a greater role in education in some countries more than others. Indeed, inequality stifles the potential for individuals to compete and rewards privilege (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumley, 2009), and researchers (e.g., Ansell, 2010) have found that some states might maintain power by allotting funds to obtain natural resources rather than funding education. The cultural context of a postsecondary institution in the U.S. will differ from the contexts of institutions in other countries because each country is comprised of its own unique complicated history, cultures, and people (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumley, 2009). Gopal (2011) highlighted the complexities of intercultural communication that faculty must navigate in a host country, such as adaptation and managing ambiguous communication, and argued that no singular intercultural development concept can cultivate an individual's intercultural competence.

**Terminology**

An assortment of inconsistent terms is used to describe the phenomena of higher education institutions functioning beyond domestic contexts, and there is little unanimity of agreement on the most appropriate terminology for the global ventures that generate TNBCs. I have found that the disparate variations in terms reflect a challenge for proponents of internationalization to communicate objectives, reach potential

stakeholders, or to alleviate skepticism and misconceptions about rationales and practices. Because branch campus development, as with every venture in higher education, involves cooperation from many disciplines, fields, departments, and majors, along with the many roles of faculty, administrators, and staff, it also brings together conflicting conceptions of purpose. Further, TNBC development brings in a definite intercultural component by extending the institution and its mission, standards, policies, organizational and operating procedures across international borders. I believe it is necessary to share different researchers' perspectives and utilize them to illustrate meanings of terms that establish context. Therefore, in this brief glossary I will clarify how frequently cited terms are defined in this study. Each term is supported by contemporary sources.

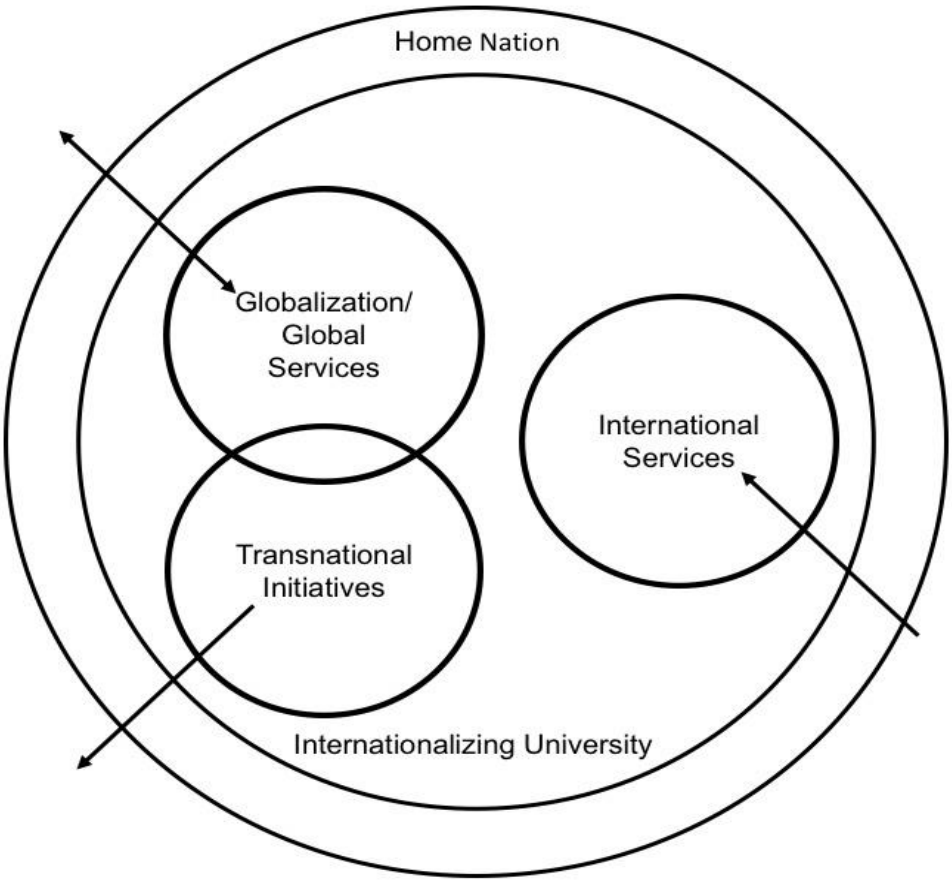


Figure 1. A hierarchy of definitions for international higher education. Directional arrows represent flows of knowledge, students, and resources. The university that claims to be international should contain one or more forms of internationalization.

***Terminology related to internationalization of higher education.*** The term *international* refers to a state of being connected to and involving more than one nation and/or its people. Though universities cannot be generalized through simplistic presumptions, because they are complex organizations, historically changing and evolving, and diverse in their realities (Bolman & Deal, 2008), they have frequently maintained an international character. Before contemporary higher education models

emerged, the first universities in medieval Europe were institutions that attracted scholars from various reaches of Europe (Altbach, 2002; Wildavsky, 2014). North American universities have been internationally connected through study abroad and other global contact since the early 20th century, regardless of the fact that they have traditionally been established to meet the needs of a local, state, or region, and are often not fully equipped to meet the demands of globalization (Stearns, 2008). Knowledge which is propagated by universities is cosmopolitan and transcends boundaries of nation and state (Torres, 2015), and international institutions claim to provide access to and disseminate knowledge and culture beyond political and conceptual borders. This is most often accomplished through internationalizing (see Figure 1), which is comprised of the acts of globalizing and providing international services, defined below.

*Internationalization* and *internationalizing* are overarching terms that describe efforts by universities to foster cross-border initiatives. The commonly cited definition of internationalization in contemporary literature, and which is specifically used for this study, is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). The term can be confusing because institutions often use it in their discourse to refer to enrolling students from abroad and setting into place associated programs and services to accommodate international learning within the institution's home nation. The function of attending to foreign students is referred to as international services, typically the role of a campus international office, and is generally unrelated to university globalization, which I explain below.

The animus for internationalization/internationalizing varies between stakeholders and institutions, and this consequently leads to confusion about what exactly the term internationalization implies (Knight, 2003). Internationalization is driven by departments' and universities' distinct contextual motives that sometimes exist independently from each other (Knight, 2004). One department in a university may want to establish a research collaboration with an institution in another country with the purpose of knowledge sharing, whereas another office may find setting up a study abroad opportunity a means to market program offerings to new potential students. Regardless of the individual motivations of the actors internationalizing a campus, the fundamental definition of internationalization is the intent of higher education crossing national and cultural borders. The terms internationalization and internationalizing do not only specifically apply to campus branches or other programs being developed outside of the home nation. The concept of transnational initiatives described in this study thus falls within the umbrella concept of internationalization.

*Globalizing*, as used in this study, means the response to and participation in the ongoing globalization of businesses, enterprises, and services. In the context of North American higher education, globalization pertains to institutions and policymakers taking an outward focus to participate in the shift to worldwide knowledge and information sharing. Globalization involves states and policymakers around the globe and provides foreign students with increased access to American educational programs outside of the U.S. (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Therefore, globalization should fall under the term internationalization as the aspect that is more specifically focused on partnerships abroad.

Many North American higher education institutions have a global office that concentrates on strategies and initiatives abroad, and a study abroad office that specializes in programs that send students abroad to other countries. Globalization of higher education takes many forms, including study abroad programming and the establishment of research exchanges abroad.

The term *knowledge economy*, also referred to as the *knowledge market* or *education market* stems from the idea that knowledge is now the primary industry that drives much of the world's economy. It became clear from the 1950s on that information industries have been replacing machine and material industries in many developed countries, and that knowledge production has become crucial to the health of national economies (Drucker, 1969; Kauppinen, 2014; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001; Naidoo, 2007). Recently many governments have attempted to create knowledge economies in their countries, with a focus on higher education as a means of driving talent and prosperity (Wildavsky, 2014). A growing number of nations, corporations, and entrepreneurs have set forth plans to establish education hubs that serve the region by developing a global knowledge and research base, as well as increasing their national economic visibility as part of the growing worldwide knowledge economy (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight & Morshidi, 2011; Lane, 2011a).

*Transnational,* when referring to education, is an aspect of campus internationalization and globalization where branches of higher education institutions or programs are opened and enroll students outside an institution's home country, and where provisions of programs and services cross over national borders. More importantly, the

campus is not a subsidiary but an extension of the main campus, meaning it is part of and governed by the same system. The rationale to use this term is based on the commonality of its usage in the literature (e.g., Lien & Wang, 2011; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007); but, other descriptive terms used for these campuses include "cross-border" (Altbach, 2004a), "offshore" (Pyvis & Chapman, 2005), "satellite" (Knight, 2015; Wildavsky, 2014), and "international" (Altbach, 2010; Lane, 2011a). The terminology is inconsistent in the literature and dependent on the perspectives of authors and practitioners. Nevertheless, the theory behind this study is aligned with the claims of contemporary scholars (Altbach, 2004a; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Lane, 2011a) that educational initiatives identified as transnational are one example of globalization and campus internationalization. Hence, the term transnational as it is used in this study, is primarily concerned with the phenomenon of branch campuses abroad.

*Neoliberalism* is an ideology that involves political free market measures, laissez-faire political economic decisions, economic competition, and various theoretical concepts that promise equitability among world economies (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015; Cho, 2015; Levidow, 2002). Though neoliberalism is the paradigm of current global affairs and international trade, it can also be a pejorative term in the sense that it in fact represents to many a continuity of inequity between developed and developing countries, and economic stratification. As an example of the common criticisms made about neoliberalism, Levidow (2002) said it "privatizes public goods, uses state expenditure to subsidize profits, weakens national regulations, removes trade barriers, and so intensifies global market competition. By fragmenting people into individual

vendors and purchasers, neoliberalism imposes greater exploitation upon human and natural resources" (p. 228). Neoliberalism provides the free market catalyst for internationalization of campuses, but it is not always considered to be ideal (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015; Kim, 2009).

*Academic Capitalism/Educational Capital* refers to the commodification of various types of knowledge and information, in which they become products for exchange in the neoliberal knowledge market (Kauppinen, 2014), and where employees at universities "are increasingly driven into entrepreneurial competition for external funds" (Levidow, 2002, p. 227). The implication is that knowledge and information are produced quickly and marketed, despite knowledge being a resource that "has not been produced originally for market exchange" (Kauppinen, 2014, p. 398). It is important to mention that the argument that knowledge as a commodity is ambiguous and can be understood from different perspectives that "can mean several things and they cannot be assimilated to some overarching conception" (Kauppinen, 2014, p. 406). More research is needed into how knowledge is a commodity for capitalist means, and how it is not only a means for generating revenue (Kauppinen, 2014). However, neoliberalism fundamentally drives the privatization of education, particularly when education divests itself away from public funding and uses market strategies (Lane & Kinser, 2011).

Scholars predicted that the twenty-first century would usher in an era of higher education that brings corporate practices into the university, and globalizing has been described as higher education institutions becoming entrepreneurial and competitive (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Wildavsky (2014) indicated that

the bureaucratic protections of educational capital are a symptomatic challenge and source of competition between stakeholders. Institutions have been forced to compete for funding and the global knowledge market is indisputably an attractive field for building a presence through marketing and collaboration with entities such as government and non-profits. In this light, many, if not most or all TNBCs are a physical manifestation of academic capitalist tendencies, particularly if the incentive for their development is to diversify funding sources in the face of dwindling state support (Kauppinen, 2012).

***Terminology related to identity.*** A consistent feature in the definitions of *identity* by researchers in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, and intercultural communication are that it is how one regards the self in relation to and through interaction with others (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Josselson, 1987; Torres et al., 2009; Wenger, 1998). Identity is a form of socially constructed self-development that comprises individuals in the social and cultural worlds and which evolves but maintains an individual's sense of self (Holland et al., 1998; Josselson, 1987). Identity is formed through cultural and dialogical processes (Holland et al., 1998), and through meaning negotiation in communities (Wenger, 1998), and "at the same time that our identity is fundamentally interwoven with others' to gain meaning, contrasting ourselves with others heightens our sense of what is uniquely individual. Often, we learn who we are by discovering our differences from others" (Josselson, 1987, pp. 10-11). All these perspectives posit identity as an interaction between the individual and social world. The phenomenographical research methodology for this study maintains this

shared representation of identity, with its specific focus on identity development through interactions in a specific context.

*Identity development* is defined in this paper as revitalization and reification of identity as it is affected by culture (Berry, 2005; Holland et al., 1998) and as it is affected by the experiences of students, particularly in terms of interactions. Fundamentally, development results from "interactions between a biological organism and environmental influences" (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011, p. 36). Most theories do not include culture in discussions of learning and personal development (Berry et al., 2011). However, from the intercultural standpoint, "we are always engaged in forming identities, in producing objectifications of self-understandings that may guide subsequent behavior. This vision emphasizes that identities are improvised—in the flow of activity within specific social situations—from the cultural resources at hand" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 4). People can evolve to behave consistent with self-authorship, as "identities are hard-won standpoints that, however dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. They are possibilities for mediating agency" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 4).

Student identity development more exclusively refers to identity reification that is specifically situated in the context of being a learner at an institution, and the influences of multiple layers of culture that encompass the student experience both inside and outside the university. There is a dearth of discussion of student identity at TNBCs in the literature, and it is elucidated through the implementation of the methods of this study. Because this study occurred in a non-Western country, I did not assume that student

development occurs in the same manner across cultures. However, the literature on college student identity development by prominent researchers is suited to the context of a university from the U.S. and was useful in exploring the conceptions of its students.

*Conception* is the way in which people understand and come to know the world around them, making it a means of discovery and conceptualization. Since this dissertation employs the method of phenomenography, the conceptions of participants are a unit of analysis that provide collective meanings to tangible experiences. Säljö (1997) described individual conceptions as being formed by discourse, through contextual cultural and historical references. The collective conception, the outcome of phenomenography, can be better understood through the context of each participant who contributes to a common voice through shared enrollment and participation at the TNBC. The phenomenographical practice of analyzing collective conceptions contrasts with phenomenological and ethnographic studies in that it aims to focus less on the structure of the experience of the phenomenon itself and more to understand the participants' interaction and relationship with the phenomenon.

The terms *global citizen* and *global citizenship* refer to the purported aim of many contemporary internationalization efforts in higher education, but both are complicated terms with multiple interpretations. The concept was traced by Nussbaum (1996), Appiah (2008), and Schattle (2009) to the ancient Greek notions of cosmopolitanism, universal citizenship beyond the loyalty or affinity to a bounded polity (but not necessarily to detach these ties). Today there are contemporary general categories of various types of global citizens with different motivations and characteristics. International activists,

managers, reformers, and globally ambitious capitalist entrepreneurs alike can be labeled as global citizens because of their extensive involvement and interest in world affairs. Schattle (2009) also mentioned *global educators*, meaning those who "render their students competitive in the international economy, while also instilling awareness and empathy of other countries, cultures, and issues of common concern across the planet" (p. 6). Therefore, the idea of a global citizen has evolved into an encompassing concept and label with an array of manifestations.

The concept of global citizenship in this study aligns with the claim that a profoundly empathetic and open-minded characteristic of identity seeks knowledge of world cultures, along with competencies that facilitate positive collaboration and communication, and representation and equitability across cultures (Schattle, 2009; Torres, 2015). Inventories have been designed to assess an individual's global citizenship or intercultural competence, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennet, & Wiseman, 2003) and the Global Citizenship Scale (Morais & Ogden, 2011). The inventories empirically measure categories such as global engagement, social responsibility, the ability to communicate in other cultures among other competencies associated with a transformation in mindset from insular and local to global.

TNBCs are a potential medium to foster global citizenship should they be designed to promote these qualities. It was not anticipated nor intended that this study would uncover evidence or awareness of global citizenship, but the term is relevant in that institutions with TNBCs often stake claim to being global and advancing

opportunities for global citizenship through programs at the TNBC, or simply by virtue of the home institution having a TNBC. It is necessary to separate the narrative claim of being global from the actual extant aspects of what makes the institution global. Disagreement remains about what qualities characterize a global university and whether universities that have been labeled global develop students into global citizens.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of the research was to respond to the lack of literature on TNBCs that stems from their newness, their status as private institutions or businesses in the host countries, and their geographical remoteness (Healey, 2016). Another concern is the lack of available information on students' branch campus program experiences, because it is uncommon for countries with TNBCs to request or gather data on the programs (Levatino, 2016; McNamara, 2013). There is little understanding of the transitions students experience at a foreign degree-conferring program, where they are international students in their own country, therefore there is a demand for more expansive research (Chapman & Pyvis, 2005; Fang & Wang, 2014; Hoare, 2012; Skokic, Rienties & Lockwood, 2016; Waterval, Frambach, Driessen, & Scherpbier, 2015). Researchers readily acknowledge that foreign students can face adaptation challenges when enrolling at institutions located in in the U.S. (Kwon, 2009), and that they often engage differently than U.S. students at the U.S. institution (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). TNBCs are unique, however, in that they are regularly intended to function as an extension to the home campus, and usually in English, but they employ faculty and administration from both the home campus and host country or region.

The student populations at TNBCs are most often native to the host country and homogenous, but the supplanted experience and operative frameworks are foreign and designed to function similarly to the home campus (Pyvis, 2011). Thus, there is a definite mixture of cultures and belief systems both within and surrounding the actual physical structures of the institution that will not accurately or entirely reflect the home nor the host cultures. It is possible U.S. institutions may face problems understanding the specific characteristics and challenges of foreign students when they pursue a North American university degree in a transnational host country as compared to students pursuing the same degree at the institution's home campus (Kwon, 2009; Ryan, 2011). Moreover, in some findings services and support structures at TNBCs have reportedly tended to be relatively absent or inadequate, or only provided on an as needed basis (Ahmad, 2015; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012b). In any case, TNBCs retain a distinct position of being foreign and a host to multiple cultures that cannot be isolated from the surrounding community and the various backgrounds of the students and faculty involved.

Human ecology theory describes interaction of populations with an environment and their adaptation to an environmental system (Patton et al., 2016). Students at a university develop within a specific evolving context, and the context is a functioning ecosystem which is both dependent on interactions, and a source of interactions. An ecosystem requires interdependent resource sharing and use to sustain a high quality of life and operate holistically. As a branch of a larger ecosystem, and not a wholly self-sustaining ecosystem, the TNBC takes on dynamics that must be explored from different

lenses. From an ecological perspective, this research is constructive to an ecosystem under study, and to other similar ecosystems, in understanding the nature of the ecosystem as it is perceived through the lens of the learners.

## The Site for This Study

The location of the research was at a TNBC near Seoul, South Korea, where there was a consortium of Western universities housed in a modern global campus facility. This site was unique in that the students were enrolled in one of only a few Bachelor's degree programs located at the campus, and students would spend one of their middle undergraduate years at the home campus outside of Korea as part of an enrollment agreement. Like many university branch campuses, the branch was run autonomously as a private investment (Lane & Kinser, 2013), but with some services provided by the home institution. Many of its policies appeared to align with the policies of the home campus in the U.S., though student housing and other living facilities were also shared with the other campuses and governed separately from the campuses through rules set by the consortium's foundation. The facilities at the campus were state of the art, with large event spaces such as an auditorium, stadium, theater, and concert hall. The student population hovered at a little under two hundred students.

***Higher education in the Korean context.*** Korea maintains a longstanding tradition of higher learning. Since the fourth century, institutions for scholars of Confucianism were open to only privileged citizens until modern universities were first developed under Japanese colonial rule (Green, 2015). The contemporary South Korean higher education system only began in the twentieth century (Green, 2015) and is now

generally comprised of a hybrid of the traditional North American and German research university models, with universities borrowing traditions such as seniority among scholars from the German model and the departmental system from the North American model (Shin, 2015). Korea maintains a high level of enthusiasm for education, an inflexible entrance exam system, and a competitive hierarchy of universities, all of which stem from the Confucian tradition that permeates Korean society (Shin, 2015). All told, as of 2013, 2.5 million of the country's 48.95 million population were enrolled as undergraduates at 222 universities across the country (Clark & Park, 2013).

The Korean higher education system is closely tied to transferring students into the Korean labor market and operates under the auspices of the Korean government's Ministry of Education (Dou & Knight, 2014; Park, 2015). An overwhelming majority of Koreans tend to live at home with their families into adulthood, and in some cases, even after they have been employed full time or married (Lee & Kim, 2010). This is due in part to expensive housing costs throughout the country, but also because of Confucian traditions about the closeness of the family unit, and except for students attending institutions from another province, it is not common for students to live away from family. However, this trend has been gradually changing since 1980 (Ho, 2015).

Student tension is heightened in Korea because of pressures beset by low birthrates, fierce competition for education and employment, and a saturated job market with low growth. This has led to various media to report that many young Koreans want to seek a way out of the country, calling it "Hell Korea" or "Hell Joseon" (Fifield, 2016), *Joseon* being the former name of the Korean peninsula. The notion that college leads

directly to employment has been undermined by economic setbacks and a lack of availability of white collar jobs. The stratification within the Korean labor market has traditionally aligned with the general social stratification of Korean society, which, though ever-changing, is strongly influenced by its Confucian foundations (Shin, 2015). In accordance with Confucian traditions, elders typically take more prominent roles, and there is a rigid hierarchy in business structure, interactions, and chains of command.

***Internationalization and university growth in Korea.*** Since 1999, South Korean higher education has been under a process of restructuring to develop more highly productive research universities (Shin & Lee, 2015). Korean universities have grown to have one of the highest enrollment rates of all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (Shin, 2015). With few exceptions, most of the higher status universities in Korea are in or near Seoul, most universities outside of Seoul are not research focused, and vocational programs take precedence over liberal arts programs (Cho, 2015). As in Western countries, the humanities have become less highly regarded in favor of professional and STEM programs. Funding for universities in the twenty-first century has also turned to a model based on perceived benefits of graduate productivity, rather than distributed equally among institutions, which is leading to greater competition and more support for graduate research-based institutions (Lee, 2000).

North American higher education maintains hegemonic status in South Korea and U.S. degrees bestow a sense of prestige (Kim, 2011; Shin, 2015; Yi & Jung, 2015). It is still quite common for Korean students to attend universities in the U.S. for higher post-

graduate degrees, which hinders the potential to develop stronger research institutions in Korea (Shin & Lee, 2015). Unique among students from countries with high rates of students going abroad, however, is the fact that Koreans often return to Korea after earning the degree (Lee & Kim, 2010). The idealization of Western education has led to the push for Korean universities to become world-class, increase internationalization through global recruiting of students and faculty, and adopt Western curriculum (Kim, 2016; Moon, 2016). However, internationalization of higher education in Korea is centered on bringing in foreign people and practices, but often without embracing concepts of inclusion or valuing the foreign students or faculty as equals (Kim, 2016; Moon, 2016).

Foreign faculty have increasingly been hired at Korean universities as part of the push for competitive internationalization (Kim, 2016). However, much of the internationalization of Korean university campuses is a response to market forces that prize Western education and standards for competitive value, but with no intention of transforming the identity and structures of institutions (Kim, 2016). Thus, foreign faculty often find they are less valued, marginalized, and powerless to the administration at Korean universities (Kim, 2016). International students at Korean universities also face exclusion with little interaction with Korean students (Moon, 2016). Universities in Korea recruit foreign students, yet reject ideas of inclusion and diversity, which means that high numbers of foreign students might be strictly for appearances. Instead, notions of ethnic nationalism remain firmly entrenched at the level of university curricula and also at the level of everyday interactions between foreign and local students (Moon,

2016, p. 92). Ethnic non-Koreans, then, are not integrated into Korean society. This might be of little surprise to anyone who has spent significant time in South Korea; many Koreans have strong attachments to family and culture (Lee & Kim, 2010).

I believe the influx of international university campuses has the potential to be contentious or at least seen as a form of external competition with Korean universities, particularly if Korean and other regional students become more attracted to the Western curriculum. On the other hand, it might be equally possible for Western universities in Korea to have only limited appeal and therefore draw few potential Korean students. Research on the experience of students at a Korean branch campus has the potential to highlight the unique experiences and the types of students that enroll at a North American university branch campus, and the reasons for enrolling. Furthermore, student participants might provide a missing voice that contributes to an understanding of what is already an ongoing trend of neoliberal internationalization of higher education in Asia (Yi & Jung, 2015).

***Korean student life.*** Korean students at institutions in the U.S. have been found to exhibit variations in levels of acculturative stress, which Lee and Padilla (2014) regarded as being a result of familiarity or non-familiarity with English, an absence of social support, and a feeling of lower status among other students. What cannot be ascertained from studies conducted at North American institutions in the U.S. is how Korean students experience a North American university in their own country, how they adapt to the associated cultures and standards of a TNBC, and its English language and Western curriculum. Unlike at postsecondary institutions in many other countries, Korean

universities are very hierarchical in their overall structure, and relationships between students and faculty are often rigid (Kim, 2011). Professors are seen as experts with whom students should not question or disagree (Moon, 2016).

Koreans also have a drinking culture that plays a major part in the life of university students, but which some international students at Korean universities find exclusive and troubling (Moon, 2016). This drinking culture results from strong collectivist norms and their impact on students (Choi, Park, & Noh, 2016). Thus, "drinking alcohol is perceived as a key way to bond with friends, colleagues, and family members" (Choi et al., 2016, p. 678). According to Moon (2016), an outcome of this is that some international students avoid these situations, particularly Muslim students, because of cultural differences. This is a hindrance to forming more meaningful relationships with Korean students (Moon, 2016).

More importantly, Korean students at Korean universities often form hierarchical and potentially lifelong senior-junior social relationships that provide mutual benefits of networking and supports during and after graduation (Kim, 2016). This relationship which is deeply embedded in Korean culture and language, is established through a set of terms of rank. Koh described these terms, saying,

> Korean offers two unique terms, *sŏnbae* and *hubae*, that have no equivalent terms in American English. These two terms are based on seniority, more specifically, on the year of joining an organization, such as a university, a company, or the military. *Sŏnbae* refers to those persons who entered before oneself, and *hubae* refers to those persons who entered after oneself…In a school setting, notice that

> *sŏnbae* and *hubae* are not synonymous with the English terms ‘upperclassmen’ and ‘lowerclassmen.’ This is a critical difference – the Korean terms are fixed, while the English terms are dynamic and subject to change. Due to Korea’s military conscription and students’ failure in the college entrance examinations, it is very possible and even likely that a student will have *sŏnbae* who are younger in age and/or behind in school. For example, imagine two students, of the same age, who graduate from high school together; he passes the college entrance examination, but she fails and so enters college one year later. Based on their year of entry, which is the only relevant factor, he is *sŏnbae* and she *hubae*. Once fixed, this is a permanent label; even if he takes a leave of absence to serve in the military and returns to find that he is now behind her in school (e.g., he is a sophomore while she is a senior), he is still *sŏnbae*. The *sŏnbae-hubae* relationship is fixed from the onset, and the two persons cannot change roles even if other factors change. Last, because of the inherent meaning encoded in the word *sŏnbae,* this term cannot be used mutually. If someone addresses you as *sŏnbae*, it would be illogical to reciprocate with *sŏnbae.* (2006, p. 149 - 150).

According to Moon (2016), this senior-junior relationship hierarchy makes it challenging for international students to communicate with Korean peers and professors.

These aspects of Korean university life may feature in the experiences of students at a Korean TNBC, or they may conversely be a point of departure between Korean students at the TNBC and their peers at Korean institutions. It is important to be aware of this system, though, because in the system of a TNBC with international students and

faculty, Korean students will likely be set apart from a social structure that their peers experience at a Korean university. In my own experience, I have found that nontraditional Korean students are sometimes indifferent to the sŏnbae and hubae hierarchy if they have not entered university along with a first-year cohort. Thus, this system should be considered a common aspect of the lives of traditional undergraduate students in South Korea, but not necessarily the rule.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study were designed with the intention to better understand the transnational higher education experience through the conceptions of the students who enroll in transnational institutions. The questions were examined by stimulating the participants to share how they engage with their environment and why. The inquiry was exploratory and iterative and integrated the understanding that "creating discovery-oriented questions can help a researcher use the process of developing and refining questions as a basis for a more rigorous and reflexive inquiry" (Agee, 2009, p. 434). The research questions informed the methodology and methods used in the study.

(1) How do first-year students from the host country perceive their identity as North American university degree earning students at a transnational campus in their own country, and what processes are involved in the formation of these conceptions?

(2) In what ways do students from the host country interact with the transnational North American university campus cultural context, and how does this impact their processes of meaning making and identity development in their first year?

(3) In what ways and how do the students from the host country perceive their goals in relation to their actual experiences, and how and why do they come to these conclusions?

These questions were explored simultaneously throughout the analysis, as it is impossible to extract the experiences and conceptions of participants from their environment. Further information on the background of human ecology and student identity will be provided in Chapter Two, and the data collection methods and analyses will be explained in Chapter Three.

# Chapter Two

This chapter is a review of relevant literature that provides much of the context for the study. The first section highlights globalization and expansion of higher education through the transnational initiative of opening branch campuses. Following that, I explore two predominant perspectives on TNBCs. After that is an examination of who benefits from the development of TNBCs. Next, there is a review of literature on student experiences and aspects of student identity development, along with further integration of the concept of human ecology. Finally, I share my own position as a qualitative researcher.

## The Expansion of Transnational Campuses

Though there has been a surge of the development of TNBCs since the turn of the century based on factors such as public budget cuts and increased global interest in North American university degree programs (Montoto, 2013), the existence of TNBCs is not a new or unusual phenomenon (Altbach, 2004b; Naidoo, 2009); in fact, the U.S. has been one of the longest running exporters of higher education programs (Altbach, 2004a). For the most part, though, branches of postsecondary institutions established outside of the U.S. up until the 1980s, such as Boston University and Johns Hopkins's campus in Italy, were extension programs provided for U.S. service members and certain expatriates studying abroad (Altbach, 2004a; Lane, 2011a; Lane, 2011b). In the 1980s there was a

short-term boom of North American university branch campuses that opened in Japan particularly for Japanese students. But, of around thirty of these institutions that opened at that time, only Temple University's branch campus survived beyond the 1990s, while the other branches shut down largely as a result of low enrollments (Altbach, 2004a; Lane, 2011b). Not long after, the twenty-first century has seen a major expansion in the number of TNBCs around the globe (Farrugia & Lane, 2013). There are upwards of 201 branch campuses currently operating around the globe, and many more under construction with plans to open in the next several years, such as a University of Pittsburgh branch in China, Arkansas State University in Mexico, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in China (C-Bert, 2016; Zhang, Kinser, & Shi, 2014). Five common types of branch campuses have been identified by Lane and Kinser (2013), shown in Table 2. The institution where this study took place was under an arrangement best represented by the Private Investors type.

Countries in East and Southeast Asia and the Gulf States have led much of the push for education cities and hubs and opened their doors to numerous agreements and partnerships with Western universities, primarily institutions from Australia, England, and the U.S. since the turn of the millennium (Dessoff, 2011; Knight, 2015). According to Knight (2011a), the impetus to create education hubs and cities in some regions and countries stems from the fact that these countries are pursuing a stronger Western educational presence because the knowledge market is essential to political and economic gains. An example of this can be found in Singapore, where Yale and the National University of Singapore established a large-scale partnership to create a

Table 2

*Types and characteristics of TNBCs*

| Type of Arrangement | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Wholly Owned | Most typical of arrangement types.<br>Home campus completely owns the facilities.<br>Risky, can be a financial liability in the case of a shutdown.<br>Can be stable and less likely to concede ownership to a partner. |
| Government Partners | Host country government (locally or nationally) owns the branch.<br>Common where the branch is part of economic restructuring. |
| Private Investors | Home institution "partners with a local private partner, usually an investment firm or property developer, to build the campus" (Lane & Kinser, 2013, p. 12).<br>Private firm earns some of the earnings from the branch.<br>The branch is sometimes an attraction for selling nearby property. |
| Renting | The home campus rents space.<br>In some cases, numerous branches open in one area.<br>Can create "a sort of shopping mall effect, whereby students have many academic options available to choose from" (Lane & Kinser, 2013, p. 12).<br>Renting can be a transition as universities develop a separate facility. |
| Academic Partners | Branch is "housed within the academic facilities of another campus" (Lane & Kinser, 2013, p. 13).<br>There are no shared degree programs, as only the facilities are used. |

Note. Types are listed in order of commonality adopted from Lane and Kinser (2013, p. 9).

knowledgeable and skilled workforce, increasing the status of Singapore's higher education system (Dessoff, 2011; Lewin, 2012; Sidhu, 2006, p. 244).

The establishment of education hubs around the globe has not been without hurdles, however. Despite the possibilities, many problems and misjudgments have plagued efforts to expand higher education globally (Wildavsky, 2014), prompting the closing and the faltering of several TNBCs. Causes are often context and location specific, but since TNBCs are typically private organizations in the host country and mostly funded by tuition revenue (Lane, 2011a; Lane & Kinser, 2011), the causes are not clearly identified in the literature, and institutions may be withholding internal research and assessment data (Hoyt & Howell, 2012). One example of a branch campus that lasted only a short time was Michigan State University's Dubai campus, which opened in 2008 and closed in 2010 because of low enrollments, poor brand appeal, and poor strategizing before and during an oncoming economic crash (Dessoff, 2011). Johns Hopkins University, on the other hand, is purported to have shut down its medical school branch in Singapore in 2007 because it was not fulfilling host country expectations (Altbach, 2010). Though the precise causes for shuttering branches is not well defined, the closings have ultimately been a result of issues such as miscommunication, mismatched expectations between different stakeholders, and economic challenges. Lane (2011b) mentioned that many TNBC administrators do not recognize impending issues until the campus has already opened. Too, challenges often cannot be fully realized by people at the home campus who are disconnected from the day-to-day occurrences at the branch.

The growth in the amount of published research has gradually paralleled the recent rise in the number of branch campuses. There is a slowly growing conversation on the topic of TNBCs in the literature that has resulted from the exponential growth in the

number of campuses now rapidly appearing around the globe (Altbach, 2010). Philip Altbach and Jane Knight have commented extensively on the topic of international branch campuses (e.g., Altbach, 2004a; 2004b; 2010; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2011b; Knight, 2014), as well have the directors of C-BERT such as Kevin Kinser and Jason Lane (e.g., Lane, 2011a; 2011b; Lane & Kinser, 2011; 2013). While much of Lane and Kinser's commentary has been policy-oriented and revolves around motivations and potential outcomes, Altbach tends to speak from a more philosophical perspective in which higher education has been continuing down a path of commercialization and competition. More focused analyses of specific institutions and regions come from faculty or administrators from those campuses (e.g., Lemke-Wescott & Johnson, 2013; Wood, 2011), or in the form of dissertations from doctoral students who have had access to transnational campuses (e.g., Mason, 2015).

However, much of the literature comes from international journals and institutions; Australia and Great Britain have been major exporters of higher education over the past twenty years, and much of the literature featured in global literature is centered on higher education systems outside of the U.S. Even though there are increasing numbers of North American university branch campuses in existence, there are an inadequate number of American sources in the literature, and many of the same authors appear in literature searches. Overall, much of the information available on transnational education is either unavailable or anecdotal (Hoyt & Howell, 2012; Knight, 2011a; Naidoo, 2009).

The proliferation of transnational campuses, and the disintegration of some, have made the concept of transnational education subject to renewed debate and analysis, but without substantial communication or transparency to form solid conclusions about their necessity, purposes, or operations. Knight (2014) and Miller-Idriss and Hanauer (2011) indicated that the lack of such transparency, data, or thorough studies of TNBCs impedes a comprehensive understanding of TNBC operations and the difficulties in their survival. Furthermore, the different types of branch campus models mentioned by Lane and Kinser (2013) are established in different countries with very different cultural practices (Lane, 2011b). It is important for universities to consider their missions and long-term purposes for globalizing when establishing branch campuses (Healey & Michael, 2015). There are numerous perspectives on how and why TNBCs should operate, and as institutions continue to expand globally, I believe there will be continued pressure to establish and apply consistent frameworks to assess the utility of TNBCs.

**Identifying Perspectives on Transnational Branch Campuses**

At present, the foremost questions from researchers and analysts about TNBCs relate to their sustainability and current growth, with often divergent perspectives on their purpose. In many, but not all cases, TNBCs are a means for establishing a recognizable presence (Altbach & Knight, 2007). This goal, however, is purported to be a departure from the traditional role of North American universities to serve the domestic public good (Farrugia & Lane, 2013). Additionally, TNBCs are private entities in the host countries, and not public institutions, hence they must retain private status to retain control of their programs and offer the same branded degree as the home institution

(Dessoff, 2011; Lane & Kinser, 2011). Privatization occurs because of public institutions expanding their institutional brand as a branch of the institution into a new country. Too, they meet private and public needs of that host locale. This classifies TNBCs as market demand-driven entities, regardless of whether that is the intention of planners. Thus, TNBCs are often perceived as being either a possibly short-lived symptom of academic capitalist tendencies or as an innovative medium to provide greater access to a global community.

Two predominant, but not definitive, overall patterns of internationalization of higher education emerge from the literature; the first is namely a financial and market-based globalizing paradigm that aligns with contemporary notions that academic capitalism and commercialization should drive new initiatives. The other is a cultural, political, and transformative strand that insists on further insight into the intentions, quality, and outcomes of higher education internationalization as a global equalizer (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015; Kim, 2009; Wood, 2011). The latter is slowly entering the conversation of TNBCs and touches on more philosophical and ethical concerns about the place of globalization in higher education (e.g., Robson, 2011). However, there is little distinction when a TNBC is established as to whether it will serve a market-based or transformative purpose.

The two perspectives cannot be easily pulled apart nor reconciled, because they are intricately tied together, particularly in the establishment of TNBCs. Because the burgeoning and widespread growth of the TNBC phenomenon and campus globalization are complicated phenomena that involve significant market, cultural, and social concerns,

in many cases differing perspectives are interwoven, or are debated in singular articles (e.g., Altbach, 2010; Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumley, 2009; Knight & Morshidi, 2011). In a recent example of this, Sidhu and Christie (2015) found that studies of global and neoliberal market trends in relation to TNBCs are important. However, Sidhu and Christie (2015) indicated that local history and context are also crucial to understanding how and why branch campuses are embraced by host communities, and how context plays a role in their evolution as unique institutions. Research, analyses, and critiques on branch campuses might be undermined without acknowledging the dynamics of the perspectives on transnational education and TNBCs.

***Market perspectives.*** The business and marketing perspective of transnational education is often connected to globalized academic capitalism (Owens & Lane, 2014). Many institutions in the twenty-first century have sought means to bring new sources of revenue to counteract losses in public funds (Levidow, 2002, Robson, 2007), and internationalization efforts at universities attract international students with higher out-of-state tuition funds. Concurrently, transnational initiatives build recognition abroad and help to promote the institution through free market means such as collaborating with private entities and using market research to determine needs and investment potential. There are financial benefits to universities because of these arrangements, but then higher education gradually becomes more of a profit-driven enterprise (Kauppinen, 2014).

In the case of TNBCs, global planners at the internationalizing university might adopt the same type of business practices as corporations, such as outsourcing to organizations with poor reputations and little concern for the environment, the lack of

welfare of employees, or the lack of social responsibility (Healey, 2016; Montoto, 2013; Wilkins, 2013). An example of this is the documented mistreatment of workers building a New York University branch in the United Arab Emirates (Kaminer & O'Driscoll, 2014). It is customary for researchers of TNBCs to highlight TNBC policy and management challenges, focusing on brand identity to determine how a campus image can be marketed to students (e.g., Wilkins, 2013). Social and affective needs of students and other stakeholders are not excluded from this perspective but are often targeted so TNBCs can develop an image that students identify with. Complementary to this viewpoint is that with some noted exceptions, college administrators have more frequently adopted the use of marketing strategies to gain an enrollment edge over competing institutions (Wilkins, 2013, p. 53). It is important to acknowledge that this type of alignment does not necessarily result from purely economic motives of generating revenue from overseas economies, but rather because the free market impacts globalization. Some researchers (e.g., Montoto, 2013) have connected branch campus development to academic capitalism and highlighted indications that TNBCs lean universities toward being increasingly neoliberal in global scope. Existing frameworks for transnational initiatives are certainly symptomatic of an academic free trade model (Wildavsky, 2014) that is primarily market- and profit-driven, capitalistic, and focused on the financial bottom line for the institution (Montoto, 2013). TNBCs are also acknowledged to derive from the current global free market paradigm, in which the globalization of higher education is commodification that is bought and sold as a private interest rather than an obligation to

the community (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 28). This paradigm, though at times disparaged, is not without merits or wholly unprincipled.

The open market tendency is pragmatic for financing, developing, and maintaining TNBCs as private entities abroad, and establishing branch institutions that retain prestigious programs and fidelity to the home institution. Universities are a costly enterprise and their establishment abroad requires financial and intellectual investment from multitudes of international sponsors, both private and public (Shams & Huisman, 2012). The recipients of services and knowledge provided in TNBCs are often middle-class students with the means to afford the costs associated with a university degree (Altbach et al., 2009). These circumstances mean that branch campus developers must be calculated in their efforts, from locating a site to establish the branch, to deciding which programs are marketable for a region, and considering how to market the programs and recruit students (Altbach et al., 2009; Wilkins et al., 2012b).

A tangible example of market-based strategizing for TNBC development is The British Council's "Opportunity Matrix" (McNamara, 2013) created by McNamara Economic Research (MCER). The matrix is based on three overlying factors: policy, market, and mobility, which determine levels of opportunity for opening TNBCs in countries in different regions of the world. Within the matrix, different countries are grouped in order of higher or lower opportunities for transnational education initiatives to succeed. It is not likely that all TNBCs are established based on purposeful matrices but are created for a host of reasons that depend on needs and interests of multiple stakeholders involved in specific internationalization efforts. However, given TNBCs are

often operated as private enterprises, it is common that opportunity factors specifically related to finance and economic value are considered by planners (Clifford, 2015; Dessoff, 2011).

***Transformative perspective.*** An alternative perspective from the marketing one, is a transformative perspective (Castles, 2001; Hanson, 2010) and generally focused on the quality of the experience for students at the TNBC, regional and local uplift, and connection with the public (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015). In many cases the outlook for the goals of this approach to fully materialize will be bleak if quality controls are not eventually established or strengthened after the opening of a TNBC (Ahmad, 2015; Wood, 2011). Academic imperialism, the imposition of non-native curriculum and modes of thought, is also a concern, given that most, if not all, branch campuses institute policies for courses to be conducted in English rather than the lingua franca of the host countries (Lemke-Westcott & Johnson, 2013). This alone might unreasonably burden students and hinder access to the campuses and their facilities by anyone in the community not only because of language barriers but also the potential of marginal communities avoiding a nearby elite global student population.

The importation of Western education is often the fundamental purpose for the campus to be developed in the host country (Wilkins, 2015). Wood (2011) examined the transferability of institutional culture from the main campus to the transnational branch, explaining that the focus at many institutions is direct transfer of the curriculum from the home campus to the TNBC. However, Pyvis (2011) questioned this practice, along with the corollary of setting quality measures based on the standards of the home campus, and

likened policies that are not culturally sensitive or context-oriented as being a form of intellectual dominance. Western degrees may confer a measure of prestige and are commonly accepted as having the potential to increase employability, which has been an attraction of German, North American, and other Western universities since at least the nineteenth century. Attached to this assumption, however, might be the construal by stakeholders that the Western system is therefore superior to education systems in the host nation.

Efforts have been made by some practitioners to be sensitive and responsive to host country cultures. Using the example of Texas A. & M. University in Qatar, Wood (2011) described the hybridization of tradition, values, and history to build affinity among the students at the Education City campus and transmit the home institution's ethos into a new context. The purpose was to develop a strong student body at the new campus that carries on time-held traditions from the home campus and reworks them into a new context that is familiar to locals of the host country. While highlighting positive experiences and the potential of the initiatives, Wood (2011) also acknowledged, however, that most of the literature addressing TNBC student experiences has been either absent, or more often critical of existing overall conditions. The implication is that more research needs to be conducted at the student and community level, criticism that has been repeated elsewhere (Lane, 2011b).

Another concern is culturally-positioned disagreements regarding host country laws, customs, social mores, and longstanding community animosities that might come into play between TNBCs and communities. There might also be questions about

protocols to handle challenges when context specific issues arise. Kelly (2010) described the extreme shift in classroom dynamics at the American University in Kuwait when the government passed a mandatory ordinance for all institutions to segregate genders in the classroom. This type of rule goes against North American institutional missions and compromises the integrity of providing the same characteristic experience to students, compromising the liberal values of the home institution. Though there is no specific data on the commonality of these occurrences, there are recent examples that underline the need for planners and programmers to be prepared for conflicts that have more commonly occurred between different governments or between governments and transnational/multinational businesses. For example, in 2015 a professor employed by New York University who had criticized labor standards in the United Arab Emirates was prevented from entering that country, bringing up questions of academic freedom (Redden, 2015; Wilkins, 2015).

These incidents highlight the implications of power differentials and cultural dominance that could play a role in how branch campuses function or are perceived to function once they are established. Exporting an institution from one culture and placing it in a new culture is likely to engender evolving cultural mismatches, as "institutions are cultural entities with specific symbolic and interpretive ideologies" (Tierney & Lanford, 2014). Each culture involved comprises multiple perspectives on a myriad of assumptions. In terms of the host culture in the organization of TNBCs, Tierney and Lanford (2014) implied "the creation of these campuses often reflects a desire to enhance the economic welfare and global visibility of the home institution, with little

accompanying analysis of the ramifications for the culture of the organization" (p. 295). An example they provide is the challenges faced by U.S. institutions with shared governance models opening in Asia, where Confucian hierarchical structures are the norm in organizations (Tierney & Lanford, 2014). Caruana and Montgomery (2015) also found transnational higher education to be disempowering to some students and faculty who might be less prepared for teaching and learning in intercultural environments. Adaptability requires tolerance for ambiguity and acceptance of different beliefs (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015). The inattention given to culture means that students in TNBCs "often find course content insufficiently adaptive to their local experience and background and therefore failing to give real life guidance" (Caruana & Montgomery, 2015, p. 19).

Similarly, Vora (2014) emphasized a mismatch in cultural concepts around the purposes of having North American university branch campuses in Qatar, describing them as an investment in a market that reifies Qatari nationalist tendencies. Concurrently, the egalitarian, secular, and multicultural Western values of the TNBCs are at odds with commonly held beliefs in Qatar (Vora, 2014, p. 2244). These issues illustrate the persistent questions of quality and service to host country communities in higher education programming at TNBCs, which exist in countries where accreditations and quality safeguards differ (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lane, 2011b). They also indicate a need for meticulous preparation, awareness, and sensitivity before establishing TNBCs, because other countries may be hostile to some of the belief systems and practices about education in the home nation (Hofstede, 1986; Lane, 2011b).

Cultural relations are asymmetrical in the sense that each nation and community that houses North American university branch campuses is very different, and various factors may play a role in how the campuses are perceived by the host country communities and regions. Distrust or disillusionment of North American university education in one region may not be a factor in another region, and economic and social advantages brought by a branch campus in one locale may contrast with the drain a branch campus might be for another host country economy. Increasing enrollments may signify high interest in and satisfaction with the branch campus, which may in turn provide more visibility for the campus and allow for opportunistic objectives such as knowledge sharing and collaboration to emerge over time. However, for this to be viable, TNBCs should model strong academic practices and share knowledge rather than being a sanctuary closed off to the outside (Ruby & Jaramillo, 2014).

**Who Benefits?**

A persistent, overarching question about the development of branch campuses is: Who are the real stakeholders that benefit and in what ways? The primary stakeholders identified in branch campus promotional literature and marketing are students, employers, communities, the home institutions, and the partners of joint ventures (Farrugia & Lane, 2013). To what extent do all of these stakeholders benefit? Critics (Altbach, 2010; Naidoo, 2007) noted that branch campuses tend to provide lower quality services than their home institutions and marginalize host country institutions by drawing in wealthy students. There is undoubtedly a measure of benefits that can be accessed to an extent by all stakeholders, such as in the Gulf States where there is increased global

interaction with foreign students and professors, and greater acceptance into host country labor markets (Wilkins, 2011). Also, TNBCs can help reduce brain drain, or the mass emigration of educated populations from countries, and increase trade, technological and research capacities (Shams & Huisman, 2012). However, it may be more prudent to determine what the specific guaranteed benefits will be before hopping on the bandwagon of branch campus development. Because TNBCs offer the same degree as their home institution but function beyond national, regional, and local boundaries, there will continue to be questions and concerns about the comparability of the TNBC experience to the home campus experience, and about the motives and implications behind opening TNBCs. There will need to be greater clarity and consistency about who stakeholders are and should be, or what the tangible benefits are for those who enroll (Naidoo, 2007; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012).

Because the development of TNBCs occurs for a broad range of reasons and assumptions, disagreements may have the potential to make a negative impact when TNCBs are poorly conceived or implemented. There is no universal agreement on the standards for the campuses or how they should be operated, which is a reason the topic continues to be a burgeoning focus for evaluation and inquiry. Another question is whether the TNBC enhances the reputation of the globalizing home institution. Ruby and Jaramillo (2014) indicated that transnational branches cannot bring in much investment from foreign sources because of their small size and scope, and that they also tend to have little significance to the host community. McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) described the exportation of programs as detracting from quality, saying that apart from extending

the institution's brand and drawing in students from other countries, the lack of a research focus at TNBCs does little for the institution back home.

One further issue that distinguishes TNBCs from their home institutions is that their high focus on teaching and curriculum occurs "at the expense of research and community services, the other two traditional roles of the university" (Chiang, 2012, p. 183). Though the potential for faculty to conduct research and develop research partnerships is often marketed as an incentive when establishing TNBC agreements, both Chiang (2012) and Shams and Huisman (2014) mentioned that there are few signs that research has been conducted at TNBCs. Shams and Huisman (2012) explained that "undertaking research in the host countries, which are largely from the developing world, requires some time-consuming prerequisite arrangements" (p. 6), and Chiang (2012) pointed out that there is a lack of mobility at the doctoral level. Sidhu (2009) examined the failure of two research enterprises, John's Hopkins International Medical Center and the University of New South Wales Asia (UNSW), and found evidence that the distance from the U.S. was too great for professors to make research commitments and that UNSW did not receive expected investment funds or enrollments. Furthermore, Sidhu (2009) found that the reliance on host country funding and a lack of financial support from the home institutions mostly disadvantaged the working-class residents of Singapore (p. 133). Healey and Michael (2015) pointed out that "Existing typologies are silent on the role of research in TNE partnerships, although it is clear that the reputation of universities in relation to research is used to good effect in accessing overseas student markets and recruiting partners" (p. 382) Healey and Michael (2015) suggested that

institutions that hope to establish collaborative research partnerships in transnational education should set clear goals and plan carefully. Until that happens, TNBCs will likely continue to be centered "on 'job-oriented' and professional courses, leaving aside the basic sciences where there are externalities for long-term development" (Chiang, 2012, p. 183).

***Student experiences.*** There is little research available in the literature regarding student experiences at branch campuses. Nair, Murdoch and Mertova (2011) conducted a comparative case study analysis of the results of student experience questionnaires at a branch campus and those at the Australian home campus and found that surveys and questionnaires are inadequate without dialogue and engagement with students. Mason (2015) examined conceptions of student success at a transnational campus in Bulgaria and found students' internal motivations, external services, and facilities available played a role in whether students could adapt to the institution. Ahmad (2015) evaluated student satisfaction and experiences at a TNBC in Malaysia, finding that most students were satisfied with their experience and were motivated by a supportive environment. Along with this, the research by Ahmad (2015) indicated that much of the student dissatisfaction with their TNBC experience springs from a lack of accommodations for social interaction. Quintal and Phau (2014) conducted a quantitative survey analysis using questions developed from various theories on conception of education quality and found, similarly to Ahmad (2015), that students at a TNBC were satisfied with their experience because of adequate and modern facilities and consistent faculty support, but that curriculum should be context specific and that administration should be more supportive.

Also, the consensus is that strong quality assessment systems should ensure strong similarity of programs at the branch campus as are offered for students at the home campus (Ahmad, 2015; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007; Ruby & Jaramillo, 2014).

A common thread across these studies is that they evaluate and highlight the successes and needs of TNBCs. However, they do not directly address the students' conceptions or construction of student identity, or how the students process their experience beyond their satisfaction with the resources, support, and curriculum provided by the branch campus. The transactions of campus developers, the experiences of faculty and staff, the climate of host country economies, and the necessities and provisions of resources are all crucial to the TNBC, but equally or more so is the experience of learners themselves, and how they conceptualize their experiences with the system. While these factors are significant and important to the operations of campuses, the way in which students understand themselves, their roles, the roles of others, and the ways in which their identities evolve while in the TNBC environment are missing pieces to understanding the ecological system of a TNBC.

Some notable exceptions are studies on graduate students and their identity formation at TNBCs in Singapore and Hong Kong by Pyvis and Chapman (2005), and Chapman and Pyvis (2005). These studies examined graduate student identity development through a framework based on learning and identity as defined by Wenger (1998). Wenger (1998) described learning as naturally occurring through social participation and engagement, which reifies knowledge and practice across generations. Very similarly, this current study assumes an approach of learning occurring through

meaning making, practice, and community (Wenger, 1998), and as being culturally and socially constructed in contexts (Holland, et al., 1998). TNBCs are specific communities where enrollees will develop their student identities through interaction and participation. Unlike Chapman and Pyvis (2005) who approached constructions of identity through the experiences of graduate students, and Pyvis and Chapman (2007), who explored the experiences of multiple cultures, this current study specifically focuses on primarily monocultural undergraduates in their first year of study.

**Student Identity Development and Self-Authorship**

Personal identity is understood as being "one's personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation) and the ways one expresses that relationship" (Torres et al., 2009, p. 577). Furthermore, "one's sense of self and beliefs about one's own social group as well others are constructed through interactions with the broader social context in which dominant values dictate norms and expectations" (Torres et al., 2009, p. 577). In the U.S., a heterogeneous nation, identities consistently intersect, and individuals take on greater recognition of their own identity and where they fit into the greater, and varyingly diverse communities in which they live (Torres, 2010). I subscribe to the idea that identities are not fixed, but continuously reified throughout individuals' lives as they share experiences with others in various contexts, which is referred to as self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Kegen, 1982; 1984).

According to Baxter Magolda, self-authorship is "using your internal voice and core personal values to guide your life" (2009, p. 2). The development of self-authorship

is the development of "strong internal foundations" (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 338) for making meaning of one's own life and moving away from dependence on authority. There are no standard practices to develop self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 345), because self-authorship is a personal journey facilitated through a process of cognitive dissonance and discomfort that prompts reflection, recognition of the cause of dissonance and pain, and finding the support to consider the issues (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 216). However, higher education functions as a catalyst when educators establish contexts for self-authorship. This can be done by "validating learners as knowers…situating learning in learners' experience…defining learning as mutually constructing meaning" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 191-192).

Baxter Magolda's work is based on Kegan's (1982; 1994) original psychological theory of individual meaning making and the emerging self. Kegan (1982; 1994) placed individuals at different places in their personal evolution, which is "an active process of increasingly organizing the relationship of the self to the environment" (p. 113). The theory applies to the field of higher education because universities have the potential to promote self-authorship by structuring their programs and environments for personal exploration, individual decision-making, and relationship building (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Piper & Buckley, 2004).

Indeed, "Intercultural maturity includes the ability to use multiple cultural frames to construct knowledge, engaging in meaningful relationships with diverse others that are grounded in appreciation of difference, and the capacity to openly engage challenges to one's beliefs" (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004, p. 5).

Baxter Magolda and King (2004) pointed out three outcomes that should be a part of curriculum at the university. These are cognitive maturity, integrated identity, and mature relationships. Generally defined, cognitive maturity is the ability to problem solve, maximize intellectual effectiveness, and make adult decisions; integrated identity is the capacity to confidently understand one's own identity and autonomy; and mature relationships refers to understanding and respecting different worldviews and working with others (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004, p. 6). These are described by Baxter Magolda and King (2004) as qualities of good citizens in the greater community, citizenship that is specifically inter-culturally oriented. Therefore, though self-authorship is the development of one's individual identity, it is also intended to be community centered, which is the interpersonal aspect of mature relationships (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). This interactive process is increasingly understood to be a significant aspect of identity development, which rarely, if ever occurs in an individual bubble.

***Interdependent identity.*** To understand student identity development as it applies to this study, it is important to acknowledge the concept of interdependent identity (Hofer, 2010; Markus & Katayama, 1991; Nisbett, 2003), because the North American university TNBC is in a national cultural context that differs from the institution's home country. Students in many countries may have a different sense of self and a different way of relating to their experiences than students from a more independent orientation of identity. Western perspectives on identity most often see "the individual as an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity who (a) comprises a unique configuration of internal attributes…and (b) behaves primarily as a consequence of these internal

attributes" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 224). However, it is typical for identities in many non-Western, including Asian cultures, to be oriented toward interdependence (Hofer, 2010; Markus & Katayama, 1991; Nisbett, 2003), meaning the self is understood in its relation to the context and the community.

Researchers question whether it is appropriate to supplant Western notions of identity into analyses of identity in non-Western cultures, since doing so has the potential to disadvantage non-Western perspectives and behaviors (Hofer, 2010). Another tendency of some researchers is to simplify individualism and collectivism as two distinct epistemologies that are polar opposites, which Triandis (2001) pointed out ignores their many dimensions which differ based on specific cultures within which they occur. Triandis (2001) posited as an example that though an Israeli kibbutz and Korean culture are both collectivist, they differ in how and why they are collectivist because of dimensions such as group harmony versus group debate. Tweed and Lehman (2002) further indicated that in spite of labels used, such as *Western*, it is important to remember that individuals may have more than one cultural frame, and that all cultures are heterogeneous. It is also possible for students to alternate between cultural learning styles based on situational cues (Tweed & Lehman, 2002).

Human ecology models are driven by the notions of interdependence and interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993; Renn & Arnold, 2003), and the students' conceptions are embedded in their context. Hofer (2010) brought up that in some cultures knowledge and beliefs may extend beyond the realm of the individual and that interdependence may foster more interpersonal self-authorship. Therefore, a TNBC

established in a region of the world where social tendencies are more interdependent might experience different forms of interaction and different conceptions of the environment among host country students than at a TNBC established elsewhere. The question of whether students would be more interdependent based on their location goes beyond the scope of this study but had to be acknowledged in order to analyze the findings in a manner that was culturally sensitive, but without assuming students are inclined to a specific orientation.

***Acknowledgment of student interaction and identity development.*** The focus on student development has evolved and brought about new theories since Chickering (1969) first explored college student development with seven vectors of identity which were later revised (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) in response to the transformations occurring in student populations (Torres et al., 2009). The seven vectors of student identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) provided a description of the change processes that students experience in college. The vectors are: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In this theory, development across the vectors is in part influenced by purposeful interaction where students form connections, create subcultures, and share interests (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 316). The seven vectors are an important construction in understanding the processes of student development, but there are many theories to understand or explain student identity development.

Weidman (1989) brought attention to interactions between college students and their faculty, peers, and other connections by describing these informal interactions as "normative pressure" (p. 301), which influence student development. Renn and Arnold (2003) mentioned that normative pressure, along with its framework for undergraduate socialization, strongly contributed to the understanding of student and environment interaction by highlighting the importance of socialization as an objective. Bronfenbrenner's (1993) human ecology theory takes this further by indicating "peer culture is important to studying college students" and that "proximal developmental processes may occur between the individual and one or more others as a result of engagement in progressively more complex activities and tasks" (Renn & Arnold, 2003, p. 268). Bronfenbrenner's (1993) definition of development is "the systematic study of the processes through which properties of the person and the environment interact to produce continuity and change in the characteristics of the person over the life course" (p. 8). Student development theories have helped foster more informed programming and research on the experiences of students at universities in the U.S. and other Western countries.

The more recent theories of student development associated with Baxter Magolda (2001; 2009) address culture and gender as significant factors in identity development. Further, researchers of these aspects have found that it may be possible that identity is understood and possibly develops differently in non-Western cultures (Hofer, 2010). From a Western perspective, a finding of low-sophistication of beliefs in academic environments is often correlated with low-achievement, but Hofer's (2010) findings in

Japan of low-sophistication of beliefs and high academic achievement are possibly more consistent with the Confucian societal upbringing and perspectives in that country and region. These aspects and understanding of identity are not explicit in the literature on TNBCs, and it is not clear how differences in Western and non-Western cultures are addressed when a Western campus branch is opened in a non-Western country. I conducted this study with the objective of learning from the participants how they self-identified and their collective understanding of their development in their first year. I also did not assume that their development was uniform within their culture, or based on their cultural background, nor that their understanding of their development was or was not culturally based.

Exploring student identity at a transnational campus is complicated by the unique contexts of the institutions, the varied student demographics, and, as with self-authorship, the many cultural spheres that comprise the institution between students, faculty, and administration. The TNBC is a community and ecosystem where students, faculty, and administrators interact in a space foreign to the nation it is situated within and often separated from many of the higher education policies and frameworks of the host nation (Lane, 2011b). At the same time, the branches are part of a larger university system in a home country and the programs are often carried over or based on curricular and cocurricular frameworks at the home campus (Altbach, 2010; Pyvis, 2011). Because the structure of the TNBC is unlike the home campus and may or may not have a strong connection to the home campus, it is unclear how students enrolled at the TNBC might identify among the entire university population and interact with others in this context.

***Ecology and interaction.*** A focus on interactions within the ecosystem illuminates students' conceptions on the development of student identity and the roles of relationships and social resources at a TNBC. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1993) presented development as a function of a person's interaction with the environment, which is described as layered; a microsystem, a mesosystem, exosystems, macrosystems, and the chronosystem. The microsystem refers to the immediate settings of the individual, where direct interaction occurs, such as a classroom. Beyond this are the mesosystems. The mesosystem, according to Renn and Arnold (2003), might include classes or a job, and is created when a person enters new settings and links his or her microsystems. The exosystem can range from external settings such the parents' workplace to policies on immigration and is comprised of places "in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7-8). The macrosystem is a set of "consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). At a TNBC, for example, the exosystem might consist of the political culture of the host country where the institution is located, and the macrosystem might be contemporary influences and significant events in the host country that have a bearing on the lifestyles of the students at the university at any given time. Finally, the chronosystem refers to development over a period of time, and the outcomes of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Renn, 2003).

The unit of analysis in a study on ecology can take place at different levels (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993), but Bronfenbrenner's model more specifically focuses on the

interaction between people and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993; Patton et al., 2016). Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the primary importance of dyadic relationships, or shared participation in activities between two people, as the foundations of development and microsystems. Dyadic relationships can be observational, where one individual shows interest in the other's activity. They can be joint activities that are shared together, or they can be primary, meaning the relationship extends beyond activities into thoughts and feelings when the individuals are not together (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 58). Below I discuss elements of student identity that relate to Bronfenbrenner through the focus on interaction in the university environment.

*Student conception of the university environment.* In the university setting, students and faculty must be given the space and support to adapt to the new framework of the TNBC systems and cultures, and the culture must be explicitly understood through training, orientation, and assessment measures (Gopal, 2011; Lemke-Wescott, 2013). Furthermore, students should be given a measure of autonomy to shape the culture of the university, so it fits their own individual and collective conceptions of what the campus should be (Nair, et al., 2011).

*Student-faculty interaction.* Interactions between students and university faculty, and the directions they take can be profoundly important for learning and development. Cox (2011) introduced a typology of interactions between students and faculty, influenced by years of research on the subject, and the interactions range from being disengaged to fully interacting at an instrumental level. These instrumental interactions humanize relationships and clarify the concern faculty have for students (Cox, 2011, p.

52). The typology, which Cox (2011) indicated is intended as a supplement to traditional surveys, is an example of the value of strong interaction between students and their instructors. Researchers have consistently found that positive and engaging student-faculty interactions have a bearing on student success and strong academic self-concept. Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010) found evidence that student-faculty interactions are beneficial to student development and achievement. Cokley (2000) found that along with GPA, supportive faculty plays a role in the achievement of African-American students in different higher education contexts. Furthermore, Strayhorn (2011) found that White students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities who interacted with faculty across racial differences tended to be more satisfied with their experiences than their peers.

Student-faculty interaction may provide similar outcomes regardless of culture, such as career opportunities and networks, and a mutual understanding of the perspectives and lifestyles between students and instructors (Kuh, Kizie, Schuh, & Witt, 2011). However, cultural norms may have a strong impact on how students and faculty interact, and even the conceptions of students and faculty on how they should interact in given contexts (Hofstede, 1986; Nisbett, 2003). Zhao, et al. (2005) found that international first-year students showed higher interactions with faculty than U.S. peers in U.S. institutions. International cultures vary in the types of interactions that are allowed or encouraged, or in which contexts they occur; some cultures value age over experience, and respect for elders is accorded in manners that strongly shape the interactions between students and professors and/or administrators (Hofstede, 1986). Gender is also a

complicated factor in student-faculty interaction (Brady & Eisler, 1999; Tatum, Schwartz, Schimmoeller, & Perry, 2013), and researchers have reported discrimination and less interaction based on intersections of race and gender (Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Picinnin, 2003; Johnson-Bailey, 2001). Gender roles and norms, and conceptions of other ethnicities also differ across global cultures (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumley 2009). Thus, variations in the types of interactions with faculty and why and where the interactions occur might take on unique forms at a TNBC.

The ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Torres et al., 2009) explains that interactions and microsystems are nested within cultures, the macrosystems, and that development occurs within these various spheres. Systems and organization within a culture, then, are often alike (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), individuals come to know more over time, and

> in the perceptual sphere the question becomes to what extent the developing person's view of the world extends beyond the immediate situation to include a picture of other settings in which he has actively participated, the relations among these settings, the nature and influence of external contexts with which he has had no face-to-face contact, and, finally, the consistent patterns of social organization, belief systems, and lifestyle specific to his own and other cultures and subcultures. (p. 28)

At a TNBC, individuals from different cultural and experiential backgrounds regularly interact, and the nature of interaction between students and faculty will be unique to environments at the TNBC.

*Student engagement and involvement.* This study is specifically focused on the experiences of first-year students at a TNBC. The highest attrition rates at North American universities occur in the first and second years and students need a supportive environment to be engaged, embraced, and challenged (Kuh, 2016; Tinto, 1999). The first year is also important for the development of the first three vectors of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors. Student engagement and student involvement are separate concepts, but they work hand in hand in the development of student identity.

Engagement refers to the structures and opportunities universities provide to prompt students' participation (Kuh, 2016). Within the U.S., institutions have taken an increasing focus on student persistence and engagement over the past few decades, and it is well understood to be critical for both learners and the institution. Institutions need to provide spaces and resources that encourage students to think, grow, and develop autonomy, and students must stay enrolled and graduate for the university to fulfill its purpose. Student engagement theories relate to the enhancement of student experiences and opportunities to promote student persistence and success, and effective outcomes demand sets of conditions provided by the institutions (Kuh et al., 2011).

Involvement is an aspect of engagement on behalf of the student (Kuh, 2003), which Astin (1984) defined as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). Full involvement means that an engaged student makes full use of the university campus. Astin (1975, 1984) described the term involvement as taking different shapes and occurring in different campus contexts, particularly in residential situations and co-curricular activities such as

participating in club and sports activities. Involvement acquaints students with other students and faculty in a way that can lead to engagement, because involvement is the initiative and effort a student makes to become familiarized with the resources available at the institution (Pace, 1982).

Central to all learning institutions should be the learner, and ideally the institution's income and prestige should be a means to provide enhanced opportunities and experiences for students to develop. Thus, for the ecosystem of the university to both thrive and survive, faculty and administration must also be cognizant of how and why students succeed within the institution, and how and why they experience being enrolled at the institution the way they do. In his later work, Tinto (2015) suggested that some primary means of increasing student persistence are fostering student self-efficacy, nurturing students' feelings of belonging, and promoting the value of the curriculum that the students are learning. Currently, North American institutions encourage purposeful activity program development by harmonizing learning goals with thorough evaluations (Wooten, Hunt, LeDuc, & Poskus, 2012). TNBCs might be limited in their capacity, at least in the beginning, to provide the amount or scope of cocurricular activities and services offered at home institutions that prompt engagement outside the classroom.

The extent to which student engagement theories are applied to the establishment of branch campus programming is inexact across campuses or programs. Student success and engagement are not primary foci of this research, but I expect they will inevitably be a part of student experiences and cannot be overlooked in any study on student conceptions of identity development. I do not assume that any TNBC ecosystem will or

will not have the immediate resources to provide an environment suitable to the same standards of success as the home institution provides. Since this is not an evaluation study, the concern is not with assessment of the university or its ability to meet specific needs or standards, regardless of the fact that curriculum and programming will figure into the lifestyles of the participants as part of the ecosystem. However, engagement and involvement appear in the forms of person-person and person-environment interaction. Identity development, "the increasingly complex understandings of self" (Torres, et al., 2009) occurs in multiple contexts. Both identity and the environment influence the ways in which individuals interact (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Torres et al., 2009), and the students' conceptions of their experiences will provide insights on the nature of their interactions within various environments at the TNBC.

*Peer Networks.* Friendships and acquaintances are essential to socialization and student success both during and after college (Astin, 1984; Renn, 2003). The types of peer networks made at branch campuses, as well as how they form and develop, might differ from those made at the home campus. Social life and interaction might be impacted by the cultural and social norms of the TNBC host country, which reflects the fact that context and location, both physically and conceptually, separate the TNBC from the home campus and cultures (Lane, 2011b). Students at a TNBC may not be enabled to form networks in the way they might at the home campus because of a rigid social hierarchy or a different relational structure. Thus, logically, social networks at TNBCs may not form in the manner that they do at the home institution, and there are likely external cultural influences on the social development of individuals.

Without acknowledging the omnipresent reality of cultural differences, no matter how subtle they may be, there is the risk of trying to force students into the mold of the home institution's country (Altbach, 2004b). This is counterproductive and can even suggest the assumption that the home country culture is superior. However, it does not mean that a TNBC should sacrifice the integrity of its programming and mission to be molded by the host country either. The fundamental purpose of the TNBC should be to provide an education akin to that of the home institution, but also be culturally sensitive and open to diverse voice and perspectives and attuned to the grounded social cultures of the host location (Pyvis, 2011; Wood, 2011).

*Services and support.* Services, or the resources of the ecosystem, have been proven to be significant to the quality of experience at TNBCs (Ahmad, 2015). Scholars have for years placed responsibility on institutions to implement specific practices that enhance student experiences and support their personal development (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). According to Lane (2011b) the heads of TNBCs must understand the differences in contexts of the home and host campuses and use available resources to attend to the distinct needs, but to remain in line with the character and mission of the campus back home. The culturally hybrid classrooms of TNBCs can be beneficial in providing valuable cross-cultural communication but can also introduce challenges when different culturally based assumptions and academic practices are in conflict. Some of the challenges might relate to group work, plagiarism, attendance, workload, and negotiation for grades. While these issues can be successfully addressed, they have been found to often be neglected until a problem occurs (Knight, 2015, p. 118). These revelations

emphasize some of the complexities for the stakeholders of branch campus programs and services and undermine notions that education systems can easily transfer beyond national and cultural borders (Hofstede, 1986).

***International student identity and cross-cultural adjustment.*** International student identity has been a subject of scrutiny for at least a century in the U.S., when international programs and accommodations were first developed (e.g., Bu, 2001), and research on the international student experience provides some understanding of how students of distant backgrounds develop their identity in a new cultural environment. de Araujo (2011) found that primary challenges to student acculturation to university campuses in the U.S. are the ability to communicate in English, locating supports for stressful situations, establishing networks, the amount of time in the U.S., the conception of being discriminated against, making friendships with locals, and being homesick. Studies on graduate students enrolled at TNBCs have found it is possible that host country students at a TNBC will also experience culture shock and identity struggles caused by the different cultures and modes of thought associated with a foreign institution in their own country (Chapman & Pyvis, 2005; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005). Pyvis and Chapman (2005) found indications that students at TNBCs experience culture shock similarly to the way in which international students experience the shock of leaving their own culture to study abroad. Students are often forced into new ways of thinking and learning due to differences in the culture of the faculty and the institution (Lane, 2011b). In this respect, TNBCs foster a need for intercultural adjustment, either on behalf of the faculty (Gopal, 2011), the students, and often both.

Berry (2005) broke group relations into two separate categories, which are acculturation and ethnic relations. I assume that host country students comprise an ethnic majority at a TNBC and therefore will be less affected by the ethnic conditions such as stereotyping and prejudice (Berry, 2005) as might be experienced as minorities in an institution. However, students attending a TNBC will experience acculturation to a dominant academic and social structure (Altbach, 2004b). Berry (2005) described this as "a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups" (p. 699). Both groups in the case of a TNBC can be assumed to be the majority host country students of one ethnic background on one side, foreign students and faculty on the other side, and in some cases foreign students and faculty of nationalities other than either the home institution or host country might add one further dimension.

In summary, a common theme that runs through the research on self-authorship associated with Baxter Magolda (2001; 2009; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Piper & Buckley, 2004), and the human ecology of Bronfenbrenner (1978), is the increasing cognitive complexity that grows through interaction with people and the environment. The theories are connected by their embracement of culture, which also features the psychological works of Berry (2005; Berry et al., 2011) and the anthropological work of Holland et al. (1998). Identity development is a complicated process of individual and interpersonal growth which I strongly attach to the theory of self-authorship, and which I place within the interpersonal framework of human ecology. This emphasizes the

significance of environments and interdependence in the process of identity development. Identity, cultural identity, location, and the intercultural environment of the TNBC are all connected to the development of the students enrolled at the TNBC.

TNBCs are hybridized intercultural spaces that primarily enroll students from host country regions and hire international faculty and administration to foster learning and support. Intercultural competence should not be assumed to develop on its own and many challenges may in fact result from clashes in cultures and worldviews (Keay, May, & O'Mahony, 2014). The outcomes of intercultural encounters range within a spectrum from harmonious to stressful (Berry, 2005), and the combination of multiple cultures in one learning space provides multiple intercultural encounters. Students at a TNBC cannot be expected to readily adjust to the new campus culture, nor should they be admitted as if they were enrolling at a host country campus operating within the intellectual framework of the host country's norms and values. Also, host country students are not studying abroad, and thus are immersed in new global cultures when they enter the conceptual spaces of the TNBC. The status of students at a TNBC differs from that of students studying abroad because many of the students are native to the region of the branch but are foreign to the overall university culture while concurrently earning the same degree as students in the home country. This may lead to ambiguity about rules, status, membership, and possible other aspects of the TNBC context. The nature of how the students interact in this unique context and develop individually and interpersonally impacts how their identities are reified. Therefore, it is necessary to understand both the environment the students interact with, and their conceptions of their experience and

individual and interpersonal development as students working toward a North American university degree at the TNBC.

**Position of the Researcher**

Qualitative research requires the researcher to make subjective judgments that should be explicated before and during the research process. The researcher conducting a qualitative study is not in a neutral position, and is in fact the instrument (Merriam, 2002). Also, illustration of the researcher's background strengthens credibility in studies that use phenomenography (Cope, 2004). In phenomenography, experience shapes conceptions (Säljö, 1997) and "prior experiences are part of the process. Describing the researcher's scholarly knowledge of a phenomenon is a means of illuminating both to the researcher themselves and to readers of the study, the context within which analysis took place" (Cope, 2004, p. 8). Much of my personal knowledge of the phenomenon of the TNBC experience is evidenced throughout literature reviews in this dissertation, but it has also been gained from brief graduate employment experiences that provided me with an insider perspective on the processes behind TNBC development.

My background is in adult and university student education, with an earlier focus on English language education, and a consistent focus on international student experiences, global education, and intercultural competence. I believe that education is a force for international relations and communication, and I have pursued the field of education of university students and adults since I first realized it as a potential for building connections through discourse, knowledge, and dialogue across cultures. In a global economy, individuals will pursue opportunities that provide them leverage and

opportunities beyond their local communities and cultures. Too, global interdependence will reward individuals who increasingly develop themselves into further becoming global citizens. Subsequently, in an ideal world, equitable interdependence will benefit citizens, communities, and nations so that everyone has increased access to a better way of life and the pursuits of knowledge and happiness.

I first traveled to South Korea upon finishing my undergraduate studies to experience what was then a wholly unfamiliar culture to me, and I went with an idealistic but resolute intention of learning how to foster positive cultural relations through immersion in a foreign workplace. My personal philosophy has been to approach the beliefs and worldviews of others with an open and uncritical mind, and to empathize with diverse cultural and national perspectives, which I have attempted to enact in the majority of my academic and professional experiences. This is not a relativist worldview, as I strongly subscribe to renewed and scholarly interpretations on cosmopolitanism, which is a position that humanity takes precedence above national boundaries and cultures, and that various cultural ideas and practices are open to discussion and dispute if they are a source of harm (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 1996). Cosmopolitanism is also a claim that people are citizens of the world whether they are actively engaged or not, and that ties to home, family, and nation are the building blocks for developing personal passions and empathy that influence attachment and identity (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 1996). This belief can be misinterpreted as being a globalist perspective that ignores or rejects familial, cultural, and national ties. However, cosmopolitanism is in fact a way of reframing these ties as being created and constructed through negotiation, global

interdependency, and interrelatedness, and it stresses the importance of all individuals (Appiah, 2008).

My understandings of education, particularly within the international and global realms, borrow from multiple fields such as sociology, linguistics, higher education theory, adult education theory, philosophy, and history. Having studied adult education, I am strongly inspired by theories and practices of transactional education and experiential learning. I further believe that everyone who works in the field of education must critically examine their own practice and strive for consistent improvement over time (Cranton & King, 2003), and explore alternative perspectives that support the development of learners.

Thus, my epistemology as both a researcher and practitioner reflects notions that humanity relates and prospers dialogically with intention, and that experience is simultaneously shared and replicated. My epistemology is further informed by the idea that individuals are not separated from their environment, and nor are the mind and body separate entities. Conceptions are representations of actual experiences with given phenomena in context. This is central to my work as both an educator and a researcher and informs all theoretical aspects of this study.

I think the assumption of TNBC developers is that Western education is prized (which it is for the most part); therefore, opening Western branches in Korea provides the students with the opportunity to access Western education. I believe standards and approaches should be integrated into the TNBC in a manner that is carefully coordinated to be both culturally sensitive and aligned with the mission of the home institution.

However, I also assume that attending a Western institution, as ideal as it may be, might separate Korean students from their own culture and eventually set them on very different trajectories. This may not be the case, though, which is the reason I wanted to learn from the students how they experience the TNBC and why.

**Synthesis**

Higher education has become a global enterprise, and institutions are expanding their reach across borders. Though questions exist regarding the necessity and purposes for the establishment of TNBCs, they continue to open across various regions of the globe. The benefits of expansion are not clear, and they vary by institutions, communities, nations, and regions. It is important to look to students, who are ordinarily understood to be the key beneficiaries of education enterprises, about how they interact in their environment and develop a student identity. Human ecology provides a foundation for understanding the phenomenon of interaction in a specific context, and students, provide clarity on their conceptions of their context and how they come to know and learn.

# Chapter Three

Research exploring students' conceptions of the undergraduate experience requires an appropriate methodology for higher education that can be used to explore student conceptions. The following chapter highlights the design of the current study, which was conducted in the interpretivist tradition. This tradition is premised on the assumption that the social world is interpreted by the researcher through experience and that conceptions of how the world works are negotiated through dialogue. First there is a description of phenomenography, which was implemented to explore the experiences described by first-year students at a TNBC. Next, I illustrate the methods, which involved conducting and analyzing interviews and supplementing interviews with analysis of campus life documents. The purpose of this design was both to understand the students' conceptions of their experiences, highlighting and relating the variations about how they perceive their own identity as students in a North American university, and to separately highlight a context on the setting of the phenomenon of this ecosystem. Thus, the primary method used in this study was a series of semi-structured, dialogic interviews with participants. The following sections include a thorough explanation of phenomenography and its philosophical grounding and uses, how data was analyzed and interpreted, and how it was applied to this study. Last, there is an explanation of the ethical protocols necessary to carry out the study.

## Phenomenography

Phenomenography is an appropriate methodology for higher education research because it is carried out with the acknowledgment that conception of experiences, particularly in educational settings, are experienced differently by individuals of different backgrounds and beliefs. Entwistle (1997) promoted attention to participant meaning rather than language or concepts, and the accessibility of phenomenography to readers makes it suitable for research in higher education settings. Phenomenography comes from the work of researchers at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden (Marton, 1986), and is "arguably the only research design (so far) to have been developed substantially within higher education research by higher education researchers" (Tight, 2016, p. 332). Phenomenography is an interpretivist methodology that began primarily from an empirical foundation (Åkerlind, 2012). Marton (1981) helped lay groundwork for the expansive use of the method in educational research and separated its focus from that of phenomenological inquiry. It has since been used in a variety of educational contexts.

The focus of phenomenography is on the variations in conceptions among a group and how they experience a phenomenon (Linder & Marshall, 2003), which differs from the purpose of phenomenology. The purpose of phenomenology is generally to interpret the essence of a phenomenon itself, whereas phenomenography is concerned with how the phenomenon is understood (Larsson & Holmström, 2007). This clarification has been repeated in the literature since phenomenography emerged, because of confusion between the two distinct methods of inquiry (Tight, 2016). Marton (1986) revealed the heart of phenomenography as being a methodology in which "we do not try to describe things as

they are, nor do we discuss whether or not things can be described 'as they are'; rather, we try to characterize how things appear to people" (p. 33). Numerous studies have proven phenomenography to be a viable method for researching participant experience (Tight, 2016). It is empirical and demands that the participants' experience be bracketed from the researcher's subjectivity in order to indulge in the participants' own conceptions of experiences (Ornek, 2008).

Phenomenographical design and analysis were congruent with the purposes of this study because phenomenography aims to describe reported experiences of learner participants and to acquire from them the structures and meanings behind their development of identity and awareness (Limberg, 2008). The design of this aspect of the study adhered to recommendations by Ashworth and Lucas (2000, p. 300) and Cope (2004, p. 8), which provide an overall framework for analysis and a focus on empathy to separate the researcher's own assumptions and enter what is described as the students' lifeworld. The lifeworld consists of students' own experiences, so the objective of the phenomenographer is to interpret the students' reflections from a second-order perspective (Cope, 2004; Marton, 1981) by bracketing researcher preconceptions about the participants' experience. The second-order perspective refers to the ability of the researcher to understand experiences through the conceptions of the participants, rather than the researcher directly describing the phenomenon (Cope, 2004, p. 7). The suggestions by Ashworth and Lucas (2000) were established as a response to questions of empirical rigor in phenomenography, but they also provide a sound structure for ensuring a separation of researcher and student conceptions.

I have conducted this study by adhering to what Marton (1986) called the third line of phenomenographic inquiry, which "centers around the 'pure' phenomenographic interest in describing how people conceive of various aspects of their reality. In most cases, the concepts under study are phenomena confronted by subjects in everyday life rather than in course material studied in school" (1986, p. 38). The study was used to explore student identity as it is described through the participants' reflections their TNBC experience, and the focus is on the students' current conceptions (at a given span of time) of their evolving lifeworld. The specific locus of study is the students' experience with the phenomenon of first-year enrollment at a North American university degree program outside of the U.S. The underlying assumption is that there would be a range of conceptions participants would have about their experiences at the branch campus, and that phenomenographical analyses would provide valuable student insight on the phenomenon and the interactive aspects of being a part of this specific ecosystem. Because little research is available on the direct experiences with this phenomenon, it was an ideal situation to be immersed in the students' own conceptions of their lifeworld (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 296).

***Framework of Phenomenography.*** The original form of phenomenography emerged in the 1970s and 1980s with the work of Ference Marton, and more recent strands have evolved since that time (Bowden, 2000; Orgill, 2012; Tight, 2016). Phenomenography uses a second order perspective (Cope, 2004; Marton, 1981; Ornek, 2008) where an experience is explained from participants' conceptions rather than as it is, or as it occurs, which is the first-order perspective of phenomenology. Phenomenography

interprets the participant conceptions of their experiences to understand the variations in how a phenomenon is experienced. The phenomenon itself is not the subject of inquiry, and the purpose for this study resulted from my assumption that descriptions of students' perspectives of the TNBC experience have not been adequately acknowledged in the literature. The goal, then, was to produce a study that can be informative, applicable, and replicable for other TNBC programs and phenomena.

Phenomenography rejects dualistic ontology (Orgill, 2012; Ornek, 2008), and is reconcilable with the concept of identity in practice, where the notions of society and people "are alike as sites, or moments, of the production and reproduction of social practices" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 270). This perspective rejects the duality of environment and participant and emphasizes the dialogue and interaction with surrounding experiences and people. Because individual conceptions of an experience differ, variations in conception are described across a group that has experienced the phenomenon (Orgill, 2012). Phenomenography is a method of getting to the heart of how individual interpretations can vary so greatly, despite that individuals are self-assured they have the most rational interpretation. (Åkerlind, 2005a). Thus, the method makes light of student conceptions of their experiences and interactions as they have lived out their identities and develop as students.

**Data Collection**

Participants were interviewed in the middle to the end of the semester when they had had time to experience the phenomenon concretely and begin forming solid conceptions about the TNBC experience. The interviews are the primary source of data

collection in phenomenography, and thus they took full precedence in providing the means to learn about student experiences. The participants were enrolled at a North American university's TNBC located near Seoul, South Korea, and the sample consisted of first-year students of Korean ethnicity.

***Sampling.*** Because the goal of this phenomenographic inquiry was to understand the variations in the experience of being Korean students at a campus from the U.S. in their own country, maximum variation sampling was first used, because "when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives" (Creswell, 2013, p. 407). Sampling in phenomenography should find maximum variation among a group (Collier-Reed & Ingerman, 2013; Collier-Reed, Ingerman, & Berglund, 2009; Green, 2005). Therefore, sampling was partial to Korean students with the least professed exposure to Western education, but mixed according to reported gender, age, and geographical origin within South Korea. The demographic and social characteristics of the participants are reported (Cope, 2004) to indicate variation in gender, age, and background, but without personal identifiers. Phenomenographical findings represent the collective understanding of a phenomenon, and therefore details of specifics about individual participants are peripheral and impertinent to the analyses, but I gathered some personal data (Table 3) from the respondents, prior to starting the interviews, related to their age, sex, experience studying abroad, and experience living abroad to report demographics and ensure maximum variation. All applicants were selected for the study.

The sampling procedure aligns with Trigwell (2000), who explained phenomenographic sampling as being constrained by two dynamics for gathering participants at a range of n = 15 to n = 20. Ten to fifteen participants are the minimum for locating variations in conceptions, whereas over twenty participants will create an inordinate amount of data that will be too much for a researcher to investigate collectively (Trigwell, 2000). Furthermore, the range of participants can be determined by preselection if it is possible a participant might provide an extreme variation in conception. Thus, for this study, the objective was a sample size of n = 20 or greater, with the purpose of finding a potentially broad range of variations. However, the TNBC in the study did not have a large population of students, and because the participants were comprised of a Korean student subset, the range of variations was anticipated to be sufficiently limited for the timeframe of the study. Therefore, engagement with the participants in interviews was comprehensive, and sampling focused on finding maximum variation of experience (Orgill, 2012). Subsequent methods for data collection and analysis of data are connected to the intentions in the sampling method.

The sample consisted of twenty-three participants, which was more than the amount initially anticipated. Participants were recruited from a list of first-year students provided from the TNBC containing limited information that conformed with the institution's provisions for "Directory Information" under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This allowed me to contact participants through recruitment emails depending on where they graduated from secondary school, which was the best available indication of whether or not a student had attended school in South Korea.

Table 3

*Participant Demographics*

| Name | Gender | Studied Abroad | Traveled Abroad |
|---|---|---|---|
| Peter | Male | No | No |
| Minnie | Female | Once | No |
| Daniel | Male | Many years | Often |
| Eun Ji | Female | No | Often |
| Madeline | Female | Many years | Often |
| Jennifer | Female | No | Often |
| Sarah | Female | No | Often |
| William | Male | No | Once |
| Yuca | Female | Yes | Often |
| Joshi | Female | No | Often |
| Jean | Female | Many years | Yes |
| Ellen | Female | No | No |
| Nicole | Female | No | Often |
| Sara | Female | No | Yes |
| Irene | Female | Yes | Often |
| Jenny | Female | No | Often |
| Kate | Female | No | Often |
| Cindy | Female | Yes | No |
| Ashley | Female | Yes | Often |
| Serena | Female | Many years | No |
| Mike | Male | Many years | Often |
| Erin | Female | Many years | Once |
| Jay | Male | Many years | Often |

Note. Age has been removed, and time spent abroad is generalized to ensure confidentiality.

If a student replied with interest, I was then able to solicit voluntary information such as whether or not the students had spent most of their life in Korea. Since the number of respondents grew quickly, I loosened my restriction on the locations of secondary schools students had graduated from, to allow for increased variation of experiences.

The respondents were primarily female, which was circumstantial based on the responses. Of the 23 respondents, about half had no experience studying abroad, and of those, two had no reported experience abroad for study or travel. Participants who had

not studied abroad reported that they had taken trips of short duration out of Korea, such as a week-long holiday to another country. The ages of the participants ranged from Western ages 18 to 33, with most of the participants in their teen years entering college directly from high school, and older students having worked full-time, transferred to the institution as first-year students, or served in the military. The participants were allowed to come up with their own pseudonym. Most of them chose names that were unrelated to their Korean names, most often English names, but a couple also chose Korean names that were different from their own.

***Interviews.*** Interviews took place with each participant. Each interview took thirty minutes to one hour, but they were able to take as long as was necessary for the experience to be shared in detail (Trigwell, 2000). Furthermore, the protocol allowed follow-up to occur based on new information or the need to saturate data. Interviews were conducted and followed up because "data collection continues until no new ways of experiencing a phenomenon are revealed through additional interviews. In other words, data collection often continues until "saturation" is reached." (Orgill, 2012). The feasibility for follow-up with participants was limited by my distance from the site, but I met with each participant twice and had them review the transcripts of their interviews and share their conceptions on common themes in the findings. The purpose of the interviews in this study was to gain interpretive phenomenographical data to understand the variations of conceptions on the phenomenon of being a first-year Korean student in a transnational North American university program.

The phenomenon is contained within and endemic to the TNBC ecosystem, and students' conceptions of the ecosystem provided knowledge of how and why the ecosystem operates the way it does. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted and developed primarily based on recommendations of Collier-Reed and Ingerman (2013), which emphasizes that the researcher and the participant create common definitions, and that the researcher should encourage participants to scrutinize their relationship with the phenomenon. Interviews in phenomenography use only a few pre-designed questions and are typically and necessarily open (Åkerlind, 2005a; Collier-Reed, et al., 2009), meaning that a researcher should "follow any unexpected lines of reasoning that the interviewee might address as some of these departures may lead to fruitful new reflections that could not have been anticipated by the researcher" (Orgill, 2012, p. 2609).

The interviews highlighted the processes and meaning making involved in the students' identity formation and their collective conception of their first year TNBC experience. The initial interview script consisted of questions constructed based on the known aspects of the TNBC ecosystem, explained in Chapters One and Two. The main foci of the questions (See Appendix A for interview template) relate to interactions with professors and student peers, followed by the purposes for enrolling at the TNBC, the experiences with services and campus activities, and the sense of autonomy and agency at the campus. Though this study was centered on interactions in the ecosystem, in other studies the investigations of purposes and expectations for enrolling at TNBCs have shown that the academic reputation of Western universities plays a factor in the decision

making of some students, as well as the expectations for higher quality facilities (Ahmad, 2015; Wilkins, et al., 2012b). However, overall motivations to attend TNBCs often differ from factors that international students consider when they study abroad at another country's home campus, such as the convenience of closeness and lower costs of TNBCs (Wilkins, et al, 2012b). Phenomenographic analysis was used to locate both individual variations and a collective purpose for enrollment, and the students' own comparisons of their anticipations with their actual experience.

The interview questions ask for concrete examples from each participant, to understand how experiences are understood by participants within their context, as different experiences may provide different insight on, or variations in the phenomena (Åkerlind, 2005a). The prewritten questions move from questions seeking tangible examples about experiences to understanding how the participants experience the phenomenon (Åkerlind, 2005a). However, the actual interviews were an open dialogue between the participant and researcher to clarify the meanings of the experience (Collier-Reed et al., 2009; Orgill, 2012) and were open to new and unprompted reflections. Examples of experiences provided by the participants are discussed, with the unstructured component of the interviews appearing as dialogical follow up questions based on initial responses. It is important for the interviewer not to introduce new or alternative conceptions to the conversation (Cope, 2004); however, if concrete examples are not given it is possible to use follow up prompts (Åkerlind, 2005a). Participants were therefore encouraged to share all their thoughts on specific experiences and explain why they felt the way they do, and their reflections are considered at face value (Cope, 2004).

This is because rather than trying to examine how deeply the responses show conceptions of the phenomenon similar to his or her own understanding, the researcher "is supposed to focus on similarities and differences between the ways in which the phenomenon appears to the participants" (Marton, 1997, p. 99).

*Structure of awareness.* Because the object of analysis is the relationship between the participants and the phenomenon (Bowden & Green, 2005), the interview questions and the framework for analyzing the interviews in this current study were designed with a structure of awareness (Cope, 2004; Marton, 2000). According to Cope (2004), "When contemplating some phenomenon in the world at a particular time and in a particular context, an individual's awareness is likely to consist of aspects of the phenomenon triggered by the context" (p. 10). Awareness is comprised of three components, which are the thematic field, the margin, and the theme (Collier-Reed, et al., 2009; Cope, 2004; Gurwitsch, 1964). The thematic field refers to the simultaneous interplay of context and features of the phenomenon (Cope, 2004; Gurwitsch, 1964). The theme, then, consists of the related parts of the phenomenon that an individual is focused on (Cope, 2004), whereas the awareness margin is comprised of "external aspects of the world not considered to be related to the phenomenon" (Cope, 2004, p. 10). Descriptions of experience result from context and awareness and a different theme may result from different contexts (Cope, 2004). Some of the findings in this study include brief descriptions of the different fields of conceptions of experiences within the structure of awareness.

The related aspects of the conception of the phenomenon emerge from interviews with multiple participants, as the foci of awareness depend on the context from which each individual has considered the phenomenon (Cope, 2004). For example, if one student has experienced the phenomenon with a stronger academic focus, his or her conception may be reflected differently than the conception of a student more concerned with the social aspects of the experience. Too, if one student has experienced a university orientation before, perhaps with an older sibling, he or she may have a different context of understanding based on knowledge of what an orientation is, whereas the students who experienced a university orientation for the first time may have a completely different understanding of the orientation. However, their conceptions are linked by the shared aspects of the dimensions of awareness (theme, margin, thematic field), and the potential range of ways of experiencing the phenomenon. This is how the dimensions of variation come into the analyses of interviews, and where common experiences are linked into categories. Thus, the structure of awareness demonstrates the phenomenon as it is experienced by the participants (Marton, 2000).

When collecting the data, I bracketed my presuppositions throughout to gain an unbiased account of the students' experience (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Cope, 2004). My goal and means of both obtaining and analyzing interview data, then, was to filter through the margins of experience and directly identify critical themes of experience common among the participants. The participant relationship to the phenomenon of being an international student at a TNBC in one's own country is the thematic field. I located the variations in the thematic field by empathizing with the participants' individual contexts

and their relationship to the phenomenon (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Analysis of data is described further below.

***Document Analysis.*** A surface reading of documents was used to gain etic knowledge about activities that occurred at the site. The documents were a casual collection of available materials such as from the student affairs Listserv, photos of advertisements and billboards on campus, and flyers. These documents were intended to supplement the emic phenomenographical method of learning about participants' experiences reflected through the dialogic interviews. The purpose in this study was to learn about the experience from the participants themselves, but also to document the researcher's understanding of the setting from the perspective of an experienced academic. I was not an enrolled student nor employee of the TNBC, and the goal was to take a fresh outsider perspective of the phenomenon.

Confirmation was made with the TNBC administration to allow the collection of documents. I collected documents of events occurring on campus as material evidence of what was taking place on campus at the time of the study. This data added insight to the dynamics of the campus experience. Many forms of data collection are possible in phenomenographic research (Richardson, 1999), but the reason for doing a disengaged document analysis was to maintain fidelity to the construct of entering the participants' own lifeworlds. Unlike some forms of ethnography, the purpose is not for the researcher to be involved in the culture and experiences of the participants (Cope, 2004). However, the experience of this specific TNBC is not familiar to readers and should be described through careful observation as a backdrop to the participants' own experiences. The

events were expected to include some or all of the participants as they were involved in various sponsored activities on campus. The results are highlighted briefly within the findings in Chapter Four.

**Data Analysis**

Phenomenographic data is often analyzed in a process that moves from consideration of individual conceptions to the collective second-order conception and minimal hierarchical variation of experiences. Phenomenography is focused on the conceptions of a group based on the variations in their individual conceptions, and therefore there is less attention paid or description given to each individual (Orgill, 2012), and the history of individuals is not central to the study (Collier-Reed et al., 2009). Interview transcripts are first analyzed individually to locate "different ways of understanding the phenomenon" (Marton & Pong, 2005) which come from similar experiences between participants and how each participant has discerned the features of the phenomenon. Then the relationships are categorized and examined to understand the collective conception of the phenomenon. According to Collier-Reed et al. (2009),

> The primary outcome of a phenomenographic analysis is a set of categories that reflect, on a collective level, the possible ways interviewees have of experiencing a phenomenon. The individual categories are given meaning in the context of the full set of categories and the full extent of the extracts from the interviews. (p. 344)

Analysis was specifically aimed to create a representation of the variations in how participants process the experience of being first-year North American university students

at a campus in a country outside of the U.S. This is an analytical method based on locating differences of conceptions and meaning making.

***Interview Data.*** Interview data was analyzed to develop *categories of descriptions* (defined below) of experience from participant reflections, and from comparisons of the ways participants have experienced aspects of the phenomenon Marton (1997) mentioned that when

> two expressions which are different at the word level reflect the same meaning, there is awareness of a certain way of understanding the phenomenon. When two expressions reflect two different meanings, two ways of understanding the phenomenon may become thematized due to the contrast effect. At this point the analysis boils down to identifying and grouping expressed ways of experiencing the phenomenon (literally or metaphorically making excerpts from the interviews and putting them into piles). (p. 100)

Unlike with many other qualitative methods, the purpose of text analysis was to "treat text as a 'snapshot' rather than try to speculate about the motives, intentions, 'mind-maps – and 'journeys' – that might have produced the data" (Cherry, 2005, p. 60). This requires bracketing of researcher assumptions to capture the most accurate image possible of the participants' experiential processes. After this, an outcome space is presented which highlights the categories of description (Cope, 2004).

Categories of description are a way of knowing how participants experience the world around them. Marton (1981) described conceptions in phenomenography as being a shared experience, saying:

> Conceptions and ways of understanding are not seen as individual qualities. Conceptions of reality are considered rather as *categories of description* to be used in facilitating the grasp of concrete cases of human functioning. Since the same categories of description appear in different situations, the set of categories is thus stable and generalizable between the situations even if individuals move from one category to another on different occasions. The totality of such categories of description denotes a kind of collective intellect, an evolutionary tool in continual development. (p. 177)

Categories of description, then, are organized structures that represent conceptions, and the terms are used interchangeably in the findings of this study.

The specific steps that were taken for data analysis follow the concrete description described by Åkerlind (2005; 2012) in phenomenographical analysis:

1. Responses were selected in terms of the question under study.
2. The phenomenon was interpreted through the highlighted responses from each of the interviews, and connections were made to develop categories of description.
3. The responses were integrated into a pool of data (Collier-Reed & Ingerman, 2013) and analyzed for meaning as a collective, separate from each participant and the context through the Hyper Research platform, so that categories of description and dimensions of variations could be explored across all the participants. As a result, "each quote has two contexts in relation to which it

has been interpreted: first, the interview from which it was taken, and second, the 'pool of meanings' to which it belongs" (Åkerlind, 2012, p. 118).

4. The responses were interpreted in each of the two contexts (individual and collective) and categorized according to similarities.
5. Similarities and differences between categories were separated to form a structure of outcomes, known as the outcome space.

*Bracketing.* Phenomenographical research demands that the researcher bracket knowledge and subjective awareness of the phenomenon to enter the experiential space of the participants and avoid influencing responses (Collier-Reed, et al., 2009; Cope, 2004; Sandbergh, 1997; Tight, 2016). Qualitative researchers develop and conduct a study with cognizance that conceptions and themes vary by individual, including the researcher interpreting the responses (Cope, 2004; Merriam, 2002). Researchers should fully disclose their background, sampling, and procedures so that readers can adequately determine the trustworthiness of the study (Cope, 2004; Merriam, 2002; Walsh, 2000; Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2016). I have carefully applied this methodology and offered the results of the study communicated through appropriate pragmatic methods (Åkerlind, 2005a; Entwistle, 1997; Orgill, 2012, p. 2610).

Bracketing is a critical aspect of phenomenography (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998; 2000; Collier-Reed et al., 2009; Cope, 2004; Ornek, 2008, Richardson, 1999; Tight, 2016) from designing the interview protocols to the analysis and interpretation of data. Ashworth and Lucas (2000) provided a list of "kinds of presupposition that must be bracketed" (p. 298), with the stipulation that bracketing will never be completely

successful. They recommended the researcher be empathetic to the experience of the participants, which means to step into the students' own understanding, or lifeworld. During interviews, it is a common habit to want to correct factual errors or to assume a students' recollections lack certainty (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000), and a researcher must be careful to interact uncritically with the participant in order to listen and carefully follow lines of inquiry provoked by responses. This can be a difficult line to balance, and it was necessary for me to tread carefully and consistently focus on maintaining dialogue.

Bracketing was best achieved by setting aside presuppositions listed by Ashworth and Lucas (2000) as being obstructive to understanding the participants' own conceptions. The presuppositions pertinent to this current study included "assuming pre-given theoretical structures or particular interpretations," "presupposing the investigator's personal knowledge and belief," and the "researcher's concern to uncover the 'cause' of certain forms of student experience" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 298). I first set aside my presuppositions by faithfully reading and re-reading the transcripts, and by listening to the audio recordings over and over. I analyzed the transcripts by leaving out any mentions of participants' experiences prior to enrolling at the TNBC, except to know their reasons why they decided to attend the TNBC, or to understand how they perceived their own transformations into TNBC students. I looked at patterns for commonality in the themes of the discussions. I also took notes in the side margins of interviews where I found participants' beliefs and experiences to be different than my prior expectations. In this sense, I believed I was engaging in pure phenomenographical inquiry of second-order conceptions of the phenomenon.

At the stage of analysis, it was possible for me to make subjective assumptions about the TNBC based on prior knowledge of the context or experience with the phenomenon, but not during the interviews, nor about the interviews and their content. In order to bracket subjective responses to both interviews and transcripts, I journaled the rationales for decisions made and my personal conceptions in the process. This is not a common aspect of phenomenography, since there is little focus on intentions and motives. However, my researcher conceptions were separated from those of the participants by examining my own motives as a researcher in making decisions and selecting responses. My explanations of presuppositions in a journal separated my own knowledge of context as a researcher from the experiences of the participants.

*Category of Description.* In step two of Åkerlind's suggested analysis, the data from the individual interviews are developed into categories based on participant responses. Afterward, the entire set of transcripts is analyzed as a whole in a pool of data, and another set of categories is developed (Collier-Reed & Ingerman, 2013). Each set of categories is compared to create an outcome space. Cope (2004) noted that "An individual category of description represents one way of experiencing the phenomenon. The differences between categories of description are distinct ones with regard to the possible ways the phenomenon can be experienced" (p. 6). The outcome space shows the relationship between categories, and highlights the variations in conceptions (Trigwell, 2000). Cope (2004) pointed out that a structure of awareness can be designed into the initial interview questions so that the questions elicit critical variations in participant experiences as intended. This can be done by avoiding leading questions, such as by

asking whether one would describe two objects as being different or not and why, rather than plainly what the differences are between two objects, which would imply difference (Cope, 2004, p. 13). Therefore, the categories of description were expected to evolve from the careful lines of inquiry in the interviews and ultimately indicate variations in experience of the phenomenon through the analysis.

***Implementation.*** Keeping with my initial plan for analyses, I transcribed all of the interviews, and then I marked and removed identifiers. I read the transcripts multiple times to be familiar with the interviews and listened to the audio while reading responses. I used a multi-pronged approach to my analysis of the interview data. My purpose was to explore utterances both within and outside of the contexts of their responses, and how they related to understanding identity development at the TNBC. I constructed the categories from the data, which Walsh (2000) described as being where "the researcher then draws on his or her particular perspective to describe the relationship the interviewee has to the phenomenon: the researcher's perspective influences the categories 'in' the data" (p. 20). According to Walsh, the categories can be understood as constructed or discovered, with discovered categories being "independent of the researcher's method of analysis" (p. 23). Because I searched and coded data based on my understanding of the topic, and based on relationships between data, I was careful in assessing whether the categories were supported by sufficient data in the form of quotes and dialogue. Therefore, the themes did not necessarily evolve, but were actively discovered along with their variations, and the categories emerged from the results of analysis.

I initially printed hardcopies of the interviews, cut out the responses to each question from each interview by hand, and assembled them into piles so they formed collective responses to each question. I then did careful readings of the responses in the context of questions, where I found and documented initial themes that stood out. Those themes would be carried over to my analyses of responses in Hyper Research. While reading through the responses and locating themes, I made the subjective determination about which theme, and eventually which category of description each response addressed. The incidences in which responses aligned with separate interview questions were rare; most often they were discovered in the interaction between myself and the data through construction (Walsh, 2000). The hardcopy responses were then set aside where they could later be used for the analysis of the pool of data (Marton, 1986). I created a spreadsheet with separate columns to document the themes, a description of each theme, and the associated quotes from which the themes were discovered.

Then, as I had done with the hard copies, I used my computer to similarly extract the responses from each of the interviews and make them into one collective response to each question in Microsoft Word. I made one document per question, so I could read the responses and code them in Hyper Research as if they were coming from one voice, again using the themes from the first reading of hardcopies to make the codes. The reason for grouping each response in this manner was to adhere to Åkerlind's (2012) instructions that

> Maintaining a focus on the transcripts and the emerging categories of description as a set, rather than on individual transcripts and categories, is…essential in order

> to maintain focus on the collective experience. That is, reading of individual transcripts and defining of individual categories should occur within the context of identifying similarities and differences among transcripts and relationships between categories, as a group. (p. 117)

I opened each response to each question as a source in Hyper Research, where I then coded the participants' responses. I was meticulous in assigning codes by sentences and short paragraphs, and I searched for themes in each response. Next, as I was finding a high volume of responses alluding to language use, particularly Korean and English, I extracted all the responses from that contained references to language and grouped them into their own collective document. This was a subjective decision I made to strengthen and verify my coding in a separate context about language use, before later placing it into the pool of data.

I created the categories of description in a reading of all the responses combined together as one long document. This allowed me to look at the responses as paragraphs and identify the heart of responses on a more general level. Then I developed another coding structure by simultaneously finding the contrasts in common themes, and then the variations within each theme. I then printed out all of the quotes, by the codes they had been assigned to in each session of coding, and meticulously arranged them and rearranged them in a physical pool of data. I looked for the variations of experience within each category of description, which then allowed me to build an outcome space.

In addition to the process of analysis, I also followed the advice of Larsson and Holmström (2007) to "assign a metaphor to the category of description" (p. 57). This

allowed me to respond to the research questions using descriptive metaphors for students' conceptions as they develop from the analyses, and to minimalize the categories of variation (Tight, 2016). An example of this is Larsson and Holmström's (2007) descriptions of how anesthesiologists perceive the work that they do, in which four categories emerged: the professional artist, the good Samaritan, the servant, and the coordinator (p. 57). This is how the second-order categories of description come about in the results of the study (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998; Marton, 1986; Richardson, 1999). Along with this, I have provided context through analysis of documents, describing the facilities and types of activities and situations where the interactions occur.

***Document Analyses.*** The documents were collected into folders and separated by category into a form that included three columns for descriptions of type, date, and location. The documents were meant to elucidate the context of the TNBC ecosystem that the students engage and interact in, rather than being for the purpose of exploring the participants' lives and triangulating data sources. Phenomenography requires the researcher to be disengaged from the students' experiences, as it might introduce researcher subjectivity and contradictions in perspectives of the researcher and participants (Cope, 2004). Thus, the document data was used to briefly describe the context of events and the settings (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2016). I also bracketed the document analyses for subjectivity and separated my own understandings from the findings of the interviews by expressing details thoroughly and my rationales clearly.

## Ethical Standards

Research on human participants is accountable to a code of ethics to ensure participant safety and privacy. The utmost attention to confidentiality was paramount to the students who participated in the study. The procedures for upholding these standards are indicated below. These procedures were carried out per the standards of the [this U.S. institution's] Institutional Review Board (IRB).

***Consent.*** Participants were informed that their participation in the study would be voluntary. The participants were allowed to opt out at any point of the study. The participants signed a consent form that included the nature and purpose of the study, and methods used and participant involvement. This information was reviewed with each student in the email invitation sent to students and orally at the beginning of interviews.

***Confidentiality.*** Participants were briefed on the importance of confidentiality and pseudonyms were used in place of their names throughout the study. Personal identifiers were altered to protect participants' identities. Pseudonyms and coding information, along with audio recordings and interview transcripts, were stored in an encrypted memory stick which was locked in a secure cabinet when not in use by the researcher for the study. This information was not shared with any other individuals. Identifying information was discussed with the participants during member checks of the interview.

***Risks.*** No risks were anticipated for the study, but interview discussions always have the potential to bring up personal issues for participants. Participants were informed that they could drop out of the study at any point and were not required to share

information they were not comfortable with sharing. Participants were also provided with open channels for communication with the researcher should any concerns have arisen.

## Conclusion

TNBCs are becoming a rapidly expanding form of higher education initiative with diverse purposes and outcomes, and they are an underrepresented subject of research in the literature. The hybridized global and cultural ecosystem that comprises a TNBC means that student identity and development at TNBCs is different than at traditional domestic higher education institutions. Questions that I was to explore in this study were how first-year students living in their home country understand their identity as North American university students and how they form their understandings, how the students interact with the cultural context at the North American institution, and how the students compare their experiences with their goals. The answers to these questions provide a lens for education researchers and practitioners to recognize undergraduate first-year student conceptions of their experiences as they are engaged with the phenomenon.

I conducted this study using phenomenography, a methodology intended to locate variations in conceptions and provide a collective and hierarchical representation of the various ways in which a phenomenon is experienced. The reason for employing this methodology was to discover the range of conceptions that students in a unique and situated context have about their relationship to a phenomenon that now exists in various structures around the world. The findings are useful for similar settings, planning and development global programs, and for stakeholders in transnational education to consider how to be efficacious in providing spaces and resources for students to develop in the

transnational context. This study, then, addresses a gap in the literature about undergraduate student experiences and identity at TNBCs.

# Chapter Four

In the preceding chapters of this dissertation, I highlighted the background of TNBCs, theories surrounding identity development, globalization, and human ecology. I also described the methodology and methods I used to examine the conceptions of first-year students at a TNBC in South Korea on their identity, their interactions, and their expectations. Phenomenography was used to examine the experiences of participants and the features of experiences (Linder & Marshall, 2003). In this chapter I report the findings of the study which I discovered through the analysis of the data. These are the categories of description or the ways in which identity development can be experienced at a TNBC. I offer evidence of and explanations of these categories of descriptions and the variations of conceptions and experiences across categories.

Rather than paraphrasing every dialogue from the interviews, I include exemplars from the data in the form of direct quotes. This will provide the same second order conceptions that the participants shared through the interviews. However, the selected quotes best represent the collective variations in conceptions about the experience at the TNBC based on thorough analysis. Their inclusion is embedded in my discussion of specific findings. The participants did not speak English as their first language, so the quotes are often not grammatically correct. However, there were no quotes that were so incomprehensible that their meaning was lost. The first section of this chapter is a

definition of the categories of description and the variations that comprise the outcome space and then the categories of description are highlighted in the subsequent sections with excerpts from the interviews.

**The Outcome Space**

The outcome space is the final product which exemplifies the complex structure of relationships between ways of experience. It is significant because it highlights and locates the experiences of the participants in this study at a specific place and time. With the outcome space, Åkerlind (2012) said

> the researcher aims to constitute not just a set of different meanings, but a logically inclusive structure relating the different meanings. The categories of description constituted by the researcher to represent different ways of experiencing a phenomenon are thus seen as representing a structured set, the 'outcome space'. This provides a way of looking at collective human experience of phenomena holistically, despite the fact that the same phenomena may be perceived differently by different people and under different circumstances. Ideally, the outcomes represent the full range of possible ways of experiencing the phenomenon in question, at this particular point in time, for the population represented by the sample group collectively. (p. 116)

In this study, the outcome space is comprised of the categories of description, or ways of experiencing the phenomenon, the themes that connect meanings in the dialogue with participants, and the dimensions of variations between the categories, seen in Table 4.

Each of these are defined below, and the outcome space is shown with a visual in Table 5.

Table 4

***The Outcome Space***

| Categories of Description | Themes | Variations |
|---|---|---|
| The ways the phenomenon is experienced.<br><br>In this study, these are also called the conceptions. | Represent utterances and discussions with similar meanings and implications.<br><br>Comprise the different conceptions. | Grouping of themes to clarify the relationships between conceptions.<br><br>Dependent on similarities between themes. |

**Categories of Description**

The interview data analyses showed that there are three overarching ways in which identity development at the South Korean TNBC could be experienced. These are the categories of description (i.e., each category being a way of experiencing the phenomenon), arranged as a loose hierarchy (i.e., pre-eminent, subordinate conception I, and subordinate conception II), with dimensions of variation that cross over each, forming the outcome space. The three categories (i.e., shared experiences) from the interview data appear in a hierarchical order that is based on the prevalence of themes within each category of description. Themes are not organized based on prominence, but each theme represents at least three quotes, and often more, on a particular experience. Six variations of experience cross the categories. The categories illustrate the ways in which the phenomenon is experienced by the participants. It is important to understand that conceptions are not finite but tied together by concrete experiences that all the

participants share as students in the same environment. Thus, it is possible to see different themes with similar names within different categories, as there are different ways that seemingly alike experiences can be understood and described. However, each conception is identifiable by the nature of the themes and the categories of experiences they represent.

**Variations**

The dimensions of variation clarify the relationships between categories. They group together themes according to how the themes have been described by the participants. According to Åkerlind (2005b), by finding variation across the categories

> these themes mark aspects of the similarity and difference between the categories, and thus between different ways of experiencing the phenomenon, and allow the inclusive relationships between the categories to be elaborated. These relationships mark the structure of the outcome space. (p. 145)

Thus, in this study, the variations show the different ways in which the themes can be understood. The conceptions are related through the variations. In this outcome space, the variations exhibit the range of experiences shared by the participants across the conceptions. The dimensions are described below to support understanding of how the themes and responses fit into the intersections of conceptions and variations.

***Initiative.*** Through the Initiative variations, the participants shared ways that they are pursuing success. In the middle of the first step of my analysis, I began to notice and find actionable statements, meaning specific statements the participants made in their

gave insight on what the participants perceived to be the appropriate behavior, disposition, or interaction responses that indicate a behavior they deem necessary to be an ideal student in this context. These statements were unprompted from Table 5

***Categories of Description***

| | Reasonably Capacitated | Peer Connected | Adapting and Becoming |
|---|---|---|---|
| Variations | | | |
| Initiative | Fostering a wider view | Getting involved and interacting | Developing studentship |
| | Taking available opportunities | Studying in groups | Becoming involved |
| | | | Studying outside of class |
| | | | Overcoming language obstacles |
| Exploration | Living free from parental control | Keeping a confidant | Seeking help |
| | Utilizing approachable faculty | Turning to peers for support | Finding spaces |
| | Chasing individual pursuits | | Developing independence/autonomy |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hindrance | Hoping for larger and livelier campus | Seeking more diversity | Seeing a lack of effort |
| | Facing tuition barriers | Expecting peers to be more efficacious | Facing a difficult commute |
| | Concerned about uncertain outcomes | | Hoping for stronger infrastructure |
| | Finding Korean professors are too traditional | | Being unsure of Their decision |

| | Reasonably Capacitated | Peer Connected | Adapting and Becoming |
|---|---|---|---|
| Global Liminality | Learning in English to be global | Interacting with internationals | Struggling with English |
| | Gaining opportunities through an American degree | Seeing internationals as separate/apart | Being Korean in American institution |
| | | Finding interactions with internationals is different | Learning new cultural norms |
| | | Finding common ground with internationals | |
| | | Experiencing diversity in homogeneity | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Haecceity | Learning more flexibly at a TNBC | Interacting collectively in a distinct space | Having easy access to faculty |
| | Experiencing a unique phenomenon | Being among Koreans who lived abroad | Learning through North American curriculum |
| | Gaining a new identity | Experiencing less hierarchical relationships | Sharing the experience outside |
| | Getting an American education | | Finding a different standard of success |
| | Being free from Korean alcohol culture | | |

| | Reasonably Capacitated | Peer Connected | Adapting and Becoming |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community | Being nearby necessities | Being part of a family | |
| | Being free from worry | Hanging out in groups | |
| | | Drinking with peers | |
| | | Engaging with friends | |
| | | Helping peers | |
| | | Interacting across institutions | |

my questioning in the interviews but in the North American branch campus. I became particularly interested in how the participants claimed to modify their behavior, how they

felt they should modify their behavior to fulfill a perceived role, or even how to adapt to being in an unfamiliar environment. These types of statements were combined with other indications of effort, which link the categories under the initiative variation.

***Exploration.*** With the Exploration variations, the participants shared how they are growing and authoring their experience. Simply put, the variation can be described in terms of how participants see themselves finding their place. Similar to the Initiative variations, these were often purported behaviors that the participants claimed they had done to personally develop. However, the difference in this variation is that the participants described behaviors in terms of how they were finding themselves, finding people for answers, and finding their places, rather than how they were trying to pursue success.

***Hindrance.*** Across the Hindrance variations, the participants shared how potential was obstructed by experiences at the TNBC. Within each conception, participants described difficulties they faced in certain areas. In some cases, the challenges were caused by what the participants perceived as a mismatch in expectations versus actual experience, and in others the participants spoke in a context of how the TNBC experience could be more ideal. The themes within this variation represent the struggles that students can face in attending a new and growing institution.

***Global Liminality.*** With the Global Liminality variations, the participants explained how they understood their global milieu. Liminality is a state of ambiguity and fluidity, where identity is negotiated. For the participants, the idea of being global was often nebulous and not thoroughly defined, but the participants were nearly unanimous in

claiming the TNBC was global and provided a global experience. In previous chapters, I have described the concepts of global and global education as being perceived in very different ways among scholars and within the literature. Thus, as the participants' explanations of what being global means aligned with one or many of the varying scholarly explanations, there is no reason to question their sincerity. However, there were divergent opinions and experiences from participants related to communicating with non-Korean students and experiencing cultural hybridity, as well of the significance of those experiences, to the extent that it is possible to say the participants were in a state of transition and discovery about being global. Therefore, while the discussions on being global were consistent, they were liminal, and they varied both within and between the different categories.

***Haecceity.*** With the Haecceity variations, the participants share how their environment is unique in relation to other institutional environments. The term haecceity is a philosophical term defined as "That property or quality of a thing by virtue of which it is unique or describable as 'this (one)'" and "The property of being a unique and individual thing" ("Haecceity," 2017). I use this term loosely, because it is less conceptual than it is useful in labeling the TNBC as a thing or place, that is unlike any other, according to the participants.

Participants often compared their experiences with what they might experience at a Korean university or a North American university in North America. In fact, the comparisons were so common that in some cases, their experience was defined by them in relation to what their experience would be elsewhere. These comparisons were not

limited to the context of the interview question of how the participants' experiences would be different at a Korean university. Further, other experiences highlighted how being enrolled at a TNBC brought about new ways of thinking among the participants and a unique way of understanding oneself and environment. The participants showed a dualistic understanding of their experience, contrasting what they saw normal in a Western or North American institutional context versus a Korean context. It is important to note that despite the fact the participants often compared and contrasted their experiences with what they thought they might experience at another institution, the Haecceity variation specifically highlights what makes the TNBC experience most unique or identifiable.

***Community.*** With the Community variations, the participants shared how they understood themselves as being part of a small, and slowly growing space, and how they interacted and participated in a small community. Words that sometimes came up in these discussions were "family" and "community," which led me to believe that the participants felt close to other students and physically close to campus facilities. Though the small campus size was also found to be a disappointment within the Hindrance variation, it also brought with it a unique lifestyle. Thus, there were no claims or implications by the participants that the small size of the campus required significant adaptation.

Below I describe the three categories of description and then the themes within each category and its variations. The descriptions of each category appear in order of how they are presented in the outcome space, and they are followed by the descriptions of

themes within each category by variation. Quotes from participants are included to represent the themes as they were brought up in the interviews.

**Conception I: Reasonably Capacitated**

This preeminent category of description signifies how the participants believed there was an extent to which the TNBC afforded them unboundedness and lack of restriction in their pursuits, and a degree of liberation from what they described as restrictive norms in Korean social hierarchies. In particular, the category highlights how the participants felt their experience at the TNBC offered a space for authoring (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998), discussed in the next chapter, that would present broad opportunities for self-direction in the future both within and beyond the institution. The discussions within this conception were centered on liberation and restraint, and how potential might be actuated or inhibited through enrollment at a TNBC. In general, the participants were focused on how they were provided for by the TNBC, how they could succeed, and also how they were hindered. Externally, capacitation was understood in terms of being at a North American institution with specific features such as English language immersion when in class or seeking information from faculty or administration, an obligatory year of study abroad, and also in part how they perceived they might be judged by society outside of the campus.

***Initiative: Fostering a wider view.*** Participants indicated that enrollment at the TNBC would provide an outlet for new experiences and impart them with a broad view. The participants perceived potential to be activated through varied experiences, contact

with people from abroad, and exposure to opportunities that might differ from those found on a traditional path as a university student in Korea. For example, Eun Ji stated

> It means I can experience many different kinds of things. And I can…I wish to had a lots of sights, or very wide point of view when I'm graduating. So, when I get graduate from the American school, it can be more positive things to me that I can think about…not narrow thinking...that's the reason I'm in [chosen major], and I want to…I thought…I realized that there's lots of things that I did not realize, and there's…and I'm the person who experienced lots of things, and I want to find something that I'm really good at and which I like…what I really love to do. So, it will be the…what I keep experience and learn about the different kinds of things, it can make my sight very wide.

It is possible to assume the wider view refers to a global view, because for some participants it refers to intercultural contact and more understanding of the world-at-large, but it also refers to a general, fresh perspective that was not described in detail, or perhaps not yet fully realized. For example, Nicole said

> I think many of the Korean students do not recognize this campus, the American University Campus. I really want to recommend them. They need to see a lot of parts of view...views? More point of views...They only see the Korean university, and for example, who really good at Korean study, they...almost everyone think "I want to be a doctor, then I will go to this university and I will be doctor." That so they do not see the other point of views but I think they have to see abroad

because the world is not small as they thought. This university could be the first step to see wide ground.

My first impression of the wider view, as described to me in the interviews, was that it was nebulous and unspecific and hard to place. However, it was frequently mentioned by the participants, and I probed at times to learn more about what participants were specifically implying. I found that in the essence of this category, the TNBC represents for them a catalyst for developing an expansive understanding of the world. The wider view mentioned by the participants seems to represent their directedness toward unique experiences at the TNBC, which would provide them with a holistic perspective on the world that they would carry with them beyond graduation.

***Initiative: Taking available opportunities.*** Most of the official student life activities took place in the main building of the campus, because the campus and its enrollment levels were still in the early stages of development. Throughout the semester, opportunities for involvement were presented by the institution through a Listserv from the Student Affairs office, and posters and banners in common meeting areas, or next to the elevators on each floor of the main campus building. Some examples of the activities and events on campus were ongoing lectures series, an annual festival with booths, an open mic student performance, yard sales, and student organization and campus internship recruitment fairs. Information sessions were offered throughout the semester for student advising, preparation for a year of study in the U.S., and questions and answers for specific majors. There were also temporary employment offers for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics and for summer student internships on campus. Also, a limited

number of registered student organizations had been set up by students. Participants shared their conceptions of the activities offered as being a potential catalyst for their capacitation. For example, according to Daniel,

> There are clubs in the same way, play basketball, play soccer, badminton and things like that. But there's a tendency here of thinking of clubs, not all clubs…except the clubs exercising together…like sports. There's a tendency of seeing that as a factor in a resume. What kind of activity of that? I get this image of…think about the clubs and your relation to you-- Maybe, I guess playing sports might be just like a hobby or just a time to actually play around once a week. But for the other organizations, they think of this as an activity for their further career, make it something in a resume, your CV sometimes.

Yuca spoke of capacitation coming in the form of greater knowledge that could be gained from listening to visiting lecturers, saying

> In this university, I attend some lectures...I love it because it's very hard to meet them individually but through this university also provides the lectures, so I think that's very valuable time...I attended two lectures, one is-- he was an ambassador in Korea and he had a lot of experience in abroad and he came to here and gave us lecture...Another second is inviting some foreign ambassadors and we also had are they, one of them gave a lecture and then there was a Korean info session and that is very good for me because I can hear from them and they-- or they here from another country and we're not familiar with...so it's very interesting hearing their stories about their countries.

Daniel's conception was more focused on the practical benefits of being involved with student organizations, whereas Yuca seemed more interested in the opportunity to gain additional knowledge through informal lectures. Both intentions express an initiative to better oneself, though for slightly different reasons. Therefore, when students participated in campus activities, they would likely be seeking an experience that would lead to long term experiential or intellectual benefits.

***Exploration: Living free from parental control.*** Beyond gaining a wider view and gaining opportunities, discussions within the framework of this conception under Exploration revealed that participants saw the TNBC as newfound independence and an enabling environment of approachable faculty and self-pursuit. Young, single adults in Western countries commonly live independently from their families but living alone before marriage is less common in South Korea (Ho, 2015). At the TNBC in this study, however, the majority of students were living alone or with roommates in residence halls on campus. Participants shared the conception that their arrangements at the TNBC provided freedom from parental supervision and the privilege of free mobility. For example, Eun Ji noted

> I live in dormitory and I don't have roommates… and it's really comfortable. I'm really happy about that. Because my parents are really very strict, and I did not that…doing something that going into home very late. But, it's…nobody cares. I can hang out with my friends and back home very late. My mother and father don't know. It's like "Ah, freedom!"

Sara also expressed that living in the residences bestowed autonomy and convenience, saying

> [It is] comfortable thing is in dormitory. Just wake up and go…it's right next to all of your classes. [It's different] because my parents was very strict so I have to go home early. But in here, I can to free.
>
> In Korea, it is normal [to set a curfew] because parents think we are in danger when we go out in late night.

As seen through both Eun Ji's and Sara's experiences, they were relieved to have freedom from parental oversight, which likely stifled their social lives. Now they were free to explore the campus and the vicinity on their own time, as well as socialize differently than at home.

***Exploration: Utilizing approachable faculty.*** The participants also found the faculty at the TNBC to be supportive of their pursuits and open to engage with them in discussion and debate. This conception contrasted with their purported beliefs of what a Korean university might be like, which was often associated with more restrictions and a less engaging faculty. Because I avoid making generalizations, and because I have been employed by Korean universities, I was slightly taken aback when participants painted a broad and sometimes bleak picture about Korean universities and faculty. However, their unpleasant descriptions of Korean universities align with Kim (2011) and Moon (2016), who found that a typical conception among Korean students is that Korean faculty are inaccessible to students and less open to questions and discussion in the classroom. Madeline reflected this conception when she said

I think, well, first of all, I feel like there are a lot of cultural differences between America and Korea. I think in that aspect because we are experiencing a more American culture in terms of education, there would be a difference there. I think one difference would be I guess the freedom, I suppose. For example, a lot of my friends who are attending just Korean universities, they're a little reluctant to ask questions or answer questions that the professor will give them. But here, it's a lot more interactive and it's a lot more discussion-based. I think in that aspect, the education type or method is a little different. It's a lot more freer, I believe, in this environment...I think the reason why is because Korea, there's a level or an authority gap. It's a lot more stricter in a Korean society. Let's say that you don't necessarily quite agree with something or you want to ask something to the professor, then in a Korean University, some students will feel a little bit reluctant I suppose or a little scared because there are cases where professor will be maybe lash out a little bit or they might get into it, just for an argument...In that sense, the student is at the lower hand because they're not quite able to voice their opinion as well as they want to. I think maybe in that aspect, it would be different because here, I think because there is a cultural difference, maybe that professors won't really have that authority. They won't be like, "Because I'm older or because I'm more experienced or because I am a professor, you're not allowed to say certain things to me or ask certain things." I think maybe in that aspect, it would be different...Hopefully, I won't have that experience. But right now, I feel when comparing it to my high school and middle school experience in just a regular

> public Korean middle school or high school, I'm a lot more able to express myself, a lot freely because there were times when I was in middle school or in high school where I felt something, some other things that the teachers et cetera, they were quite a little unfair. But, I wasn't necessarily able to voice my opinion on something because they were using the authority card on me. Looking back on that and then coming back to here in this environment, I don't really have that experience.

Sara described the same contrast, saying

> In Korean university, the professor is have their…How can you explain that? Their thinking, their own thinking that they have to do this and this to students. But in here, professor can listen too as well...In Korean university, the professor have to home and there is so many students. Student can't ask professor face-to-face, just email or just like that. But in here, professor can listen to us by face-to-face. So, if you have difficulties about studying, the teachers ask to do it.

Both participants showed a dualistic understanding of their experience, contrasting what they saw as a free exchange of ideas in the Western classroom versus a rigid Korean classroom. Though this theme might also seem to fit in the Haecceity variation because of the contrasts, I determined the focus was on how the students could freely seek out their professors for answers and information. Freedom in this sense then, means the freedom to interact and the ability to situate their ideas through rapport with the faculty.

***Exploration: Finding individual reliance in context.*** Participants also reflected on how they were following their own interests and dreams and on the relevance of their

experience to their own lives. More specifically, though, most of their anecdotes were about both active and mental strategies they used to follow their own pursuits within their context. These included attending specific events for information, working on personal projects, seeking specific opportunities, and searching inside the self to both personalize and enhance their experience as students. Sara focused on how she tapped into her self-assurance to succeed, saying

> Because this is a foreign university in Korea, I think that the trust about my dream is most important, because I think I choose more difficult way to study but easy way to go to my dream. Because in Korea University, there is so many same things in university. So, it is tired to studying here, many difficulties. But if I am trusting about my dream, then I can study well.

Sarah described an active pursuit that gave her an outlet for expression:

> Recently, I started Facebook page on myself. It was just...I make that for sharing my experiences and like just blog. Since Korean students, since I live only in Korea and study in Korea, this experience is my special to me, so I want to share with the in social media, so I started that.

Both participants found self-reliance to be a strategy within their particular context of being at a foreign university in South Korea. Their reliance was framed within both the foreign university, mentioned by Sara, and within Korea, according to Sarah, and it was these particular circumstances that they claimed inspired them to explore their potential.

***Hindrance: Hoping for Larger and Livelier Campus.*** Though this category is predominantly represented by conceptions with a positive tone, the participants also

pointed out hindrances to their autonomy and capacity, such as the small size of the campus, high tuition, learning under Korean professors, and uncertainty. This situation illustrates how each category of description should be understood as a related range or an imaginary continuum of variations of conceptions about similar experiences. Though the participants expressed they were capacitated within this current category, it was only to an unspecified degree and depended on specific circumstances. Thus, where there is capacitation, there is also potential incapacitation.

The TNBC was consistently described as small because of its low enrollments and small class sizes, which in this category and variation was seen as a shortcoming. Jenny brought up the small size of the campus, explaining

> I want more...the university is very short, very small students, that's why the class...some class, they did not open...Because, actually, I took the math class, but I just the only one...I very thanks for the...to open. But, I want to...the other students, they want to take...

Irene described a bigger picture of the situation:

> I think we need to promote this university to many high school students to join this university. Because, we have just a few of students in this university. That's another problem about this university...If a lot of students joined this university, the nation will give more good opportunities to us, because I heard that our Korea government help this university to...help this university...to develop.

The participants clearly felt that the size of enrollments hindered the potential of the campus, because they believed the TNBC could not offer a wide range of courses, nor

receive external support, which may have meant funding. It is not certain from this theme that a larger campus was an initial expectation, but the participants expressed that their current experience was hindered to an unspecified degree by low enrollment.

***Hindrance: Facing tuition barriers.*** The cost of enrollment was described as steep, particularly to students who did not consider their families to be financially prosperous. This meant to the participants that access to the experience could be limited to a privileged few. Too, they professed that a North American university should provide a strong educational experience worth its price. Jean brought up a concern about the price of enrollment:

> Compared to other American universities, the tuition here is not that much expensive, but compared to Korean is it very much expensive. So, for me getting an American education in a foreign country…in that sense it is worth it to pay that fee. But if it were not an American university, it might not be worth that much. Professors around here have experience working at other Korean universities, and those universities are much cheaper.

Mike mentioned that he was adversely affected by tuition prices and that his opportunities could be in jeopardy:

> Well, the thing is, what is difficult for me here is not the academic stuff but the tuition stuff, you know, the financial stuff. Because I'm not such a rich kids, like a standard rich kids. I actually had to work part-time jobs to keep up with my tuition. The thing is, there's a student loan. They can lend the money for your tuition and then they pay back afterwards. We don't have that here. That is really

> the challenge that me and my family have. That would be our only problem...To be honest, I'm not even sure if I can continue with this study next semester because the student loan is impossible also. The admission center or [the student affairs office], they always tell me, "Yeah, we're going to be ready in two years or something." I can't wait two years for them because...They're thinking about it or just a suggestion. Giving suggestions to the Ministry of Education and such like that, the organizations. They're actually trying their best but they're saying a minimum of two years, you have to wait to get a student loan. For the two years I just have to pay the full amount, the $10,000 per semester. That's really hard for me. That is, actually, also the barrier for the students who desire to be here and to be educated. That aspect is some barrier that we have or at least I have. That's a really hard part. Everything else, academic or friends, or atmosphere, also transportation or entertainments around the city, I absolutely love it.

I believe that the fact that tuition was an inhibitor for students already enrolled at the campus meant that many potential enrollees might be discouraged from attending. However, I am not familiar with the costs of the institution or the justifications for setting specific tuition rates. Because of high tuition rates, the TNBC may have been an exclusive domain with limited access, but there remained a question of what types of funding might someday be available to students who wish to enroll.

***Hindrance: Concerned about uncertain outcomes.*** Beyond the issue of cost, participants also spoke of uncertainty in terms of how they might be accepted by society, and particularly employers when they graduate. The participants sometimes expressed

concern about what might happen to the TNBC over time, given the low enrollments and management arrangements of the institution. A few participants mentioned rumors among students that the campus would be moved away or not succeed. This apprehension seemed to have the potential to cause some apprehension among students who felt the same, which Daniel expressed in some detail:

> It's difficult and also uncomfortable thing about this is, since it's an American University in Korea, and not American University in America, there are worries of the students, especially ones in their seniors, after they graduate, about the outcome of this degree. Will the companies value this and will the engagement and socializing with the professors in this, the peers and the students here…will that mean it at all after they graduate? It's this uncomfortable thing about here, the thing here is the worries of the future is unpredictable. If you want to go to this school, that everybody hasn't heard of as a university...Here, you don't have any graduates; you just take your chance here. Not sure...it's unpredictable. You always have to worry about, "How will my degree be seen by the company?" We expect that you'll be seen as a unique experience, but it might not be the case. There's that creative atmosphere here. That kind of worry.

Peter was concerned about rumors he had heard that the TNBC might be endangered and that students should come together to bolster the institution's longevity:

> There has some rumors that like [the foundation in charge of campus operations] will be moved to the other national universities, so I think it is not very even…I think it is an uneven situation that can be very unstabilized. I really wish this

> school campus must be stabilized first, then give much more support to each of universities to gain much more students. And, as we have started this school campus only a few years ago, we need to think more view, think more wider view and give much more support to make great events at this global campus...The students, actually students are the most of the leaders of this university. They are the leaders who carries this university, so I think most of the officers and the professors should also try hard, but also the students should actually try to struggle to like solve this kind of problems by helping together and give some kind of solutions to the office...Just like when we finish the class like Friday, or during the weekends, we just meet together and we have meals together, we usually have conversation about various topics, but also it includes the [organization overseeing the campus] campus problems.

Daniel was more focused on the quality of the degree after graduation because of the implication that the institution was obscure. Peter, on the other hand, was concerned about the institution's instability and the threat of further instability. Though these concerns are thinly connected, they both fit within the category of capacitation, because the uneasiness represents the near end of an imaginary spectrum of capacitation versus incapacitation. Thus, whereas the participants never described themselves as incapacitated, they did indicate a limit to full capacitation, which is evident in this particular variation.

***Hindrance: Finding Korean professors are too traditional.*** One further limitation mentioned by participants was that Korean professors were too traditional,

which meant that students in classes with Korean professors might be somewhat disadvantaged. This conception often contrasted with how they viewed their non-Korean professors, who were considered to be more engaging and qualified for the TNBC. In a few discussions, participants' descriptions sounded personal or harsh, and I could not differentiate between whether there was a bias based on cultural stereotypes about Western versus non-Western faculty and curriculum, or general displeasure with particular instructors based on undisclosed interactions or individual instructional style. Based on the larger context of discussions across interviews, it might have also meant that the participants' predominant expectations of a North American university were that they would solely have native English-speaking instructors from a Western educational background. However, both the faculty and administration among all the departments had a quite balanced ratio of Korean and non-Korean individuals. William spoke the most unenthusiastically about Korean professors:

> I don't know exactly the professor in Korea, but they don't want to see one-on-one with students. They must hate us. They must hate students and professors...Korean students hate professors, the professors hate students...They don't want to meet one-on-one, the students. The professors in Korea they…Our [course subject] professors is a Korean professor. I think that's just a personal things that professors in U.S. they don't late in class. They never late the class...This professor is always late, five minutes or sometimes he lates 30 minutes. I think that professors in the university, they thought, they are this now… [Gesturing with hands] Professors are here and students are like here, just

> a little higher than students. But in Korea Education System, professors here [gestures hand held high], students here [gestures hand low]...Just slaves. So, they don't interact too much with them. But U.S., I like the U.S. system, education culture. Because you can interact or communicate every time everywhere.

William echoed, though more harshly, the general sentiments of other participants about Korean faculty. However, he made the clearest connection between a stereotypical concept of Korean professors and a specific experience with a Korean professor at the TNBC. It was apparent in this variation that students could feel hindered by a particular style of instruction and interaction that they associated with a traditional Korean mindset.

***Global liminality: Learning in English to be global.*** Within the Global Liminality variation, English was generally seen as an empowering and unique feature of the TNBC experience. Within this particular category, English fluency was described as a marker for success at the institution and as a significant prerequisite for employment after graduation. English was also seen by some as a preferable medium for instruction because it was easier than academic Korean and would lead to more opportunities than solely learning in Korean. Such was the case for Minnie, who said:

> I want to go…I want to study abroad...And, I am interested in English. Koreans are all hanja [traditional Sino-Korean characters]. So, I'm hard in hanja. So, if I don't know hanja, I can't translate hard words...But, English is more easier than that, so I can learn easier in English...It's complicated, and it's not familiar. Learning new knowledge, it's better to learn English, because English is more easy to learn than Korean when I learned new knowledge. It's easy because

> English have prefix and suffix so that I can easy to understand, but Korean made up of hanja. So, it is hard to understand...Actually, I was attended Korean university last year, but I was hard time.

Ellen mentioned how English was supportive to her ambitions:

> Actually, I didn't think about that things but, in future when I really want to work in a company or something then and maybe, be a good effect I think, because they will think that, "she can speak English a little bit better than other people who studied in Korean University." I think, that will be a good thing for me...I think that English is the best. Yes, because, for example, my friends who are studying in a Korean University, they really don't have an experience...they don't have a chance to speak English a lot, I think. But in here, I really need to speak English a lot and study in English, so, yes, that is the most important one I think.

Each of the quotes from these participants indicated a desire to learn in English. They felt this would prompt their capacity at present and in the future. Ellen contrasted her experience with students at Korean universities who she assumed might miss out on the opportunity to interact in English. English was repeatedly brought up in responses to different interview questions about the TNBC, which is discussed further in the next chapter.

***Global liminality: Gaining opportunities through an American degree.***

Discussions were sometimes focused on general opportunities that could be gained from enrollment at a TNBC. This theme sits comfortably within the Reasonably Capacitated category because opportunity represents capacitation. The participants expressed that

they were advantaged over Korean students at Korean universities because the TNBC offered a well-rounded experience with more opportunities available that might have a positive impact on future goals. Obtaining an American degree represented to them an experience that would offer a wide range of prospects both during and after their time as students. Jean described how this experience was advantageous:

> Opportunities are good because I can experience something I cannot experience in other Korean universities. Like, while many other Korean universities expect students to take exams like TOEIC, at this school they ask us just to go for American way, not anything about Korea: like they have a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] workshop, which is not that common. Here they offer an American style CPA program.

Ashley described obtaining the American degree as gaining more practical skill sets:

> If I have a chance to work in abroad I think it [an American degree] can help more than Korean university degree...It can make sure that I can do English and do conversation with other co-employees. There's many barriers in Korean universities so I can't do my study well but if I study here I think I can improve my own skills on academic or...so my GPA will be upgraded than Korean university.

Jennifer described how her experience at the TNBC was more beneficial than the experiences of her peers at Korean universities:

> At first, it was so inconvenient due to this environment, so at first I was so envy to my friends in Korean Universities. But, after one month, I think that I am better

> than them, because most of Koreans students think about their future because this society is really not stable. So, they worried about their future like their TOEIC results and their activities or their job so they planned themselves about their University life and this seemed not good for me. So, I think I am better than them because I don't worried about my future…future detail...Because I think I have many opportunities, more opportunities than them, because Korean students…they have opportunities too, but Korean students want to go some jobs that most people want. They want to go Samsung, and government officials. So, they want to go that way even though they have opportunities in other ways because it is stable and for their...They felt when they go to… Korean students want to go the company which have high name value and government official, it is stable in Korea. They ensure the elderly life, and also doctors. Many Korean students think that doctors is high salary job. They want to go that way even though they have many opportunities.

Each of these conceptions highlights a different aspect of opportunity afforded by a transnational campus and notably in contrast to Korean institutions. Jean described access to North American curriculum that she normally would not have. Ashley focused on the skills conferred through effort for a North American degree and their advantages for her future. Jennifer concentrated even further on future opportunities that would become available through non-traditional avenues at the TNBC. Thus, as was the case with the Learning in English to be Global theme, a Western degree and curriculum represented capacitation that comes from enrollment at the TNBC.

***Global liminality: Experiencing cultural hybridity.*** Participants overwhelmingly indicated that the TNBC was a global university or growing into a global university, because it was a non-native institution located in a country different from its home country. A global university was sometimes seen as an institution that opens its doors to people of many nationalities or which operates programs outside of its home country. Key to this particular theme is the conception that a culturally hybrid institution is seen as being advantageous. Cindy described being global as being able to acknowledge multiple cultural-based views and said the TNBC was a culturally hybrid institution:

> Becoming global is not like a certain condition, it is more like a process going on in the world. I think a global person is a person who do not think only in his/her country's perspective but able to think in various countries' perspectives. Also, a global person has to live in many countries to experience a lot... [this U.S. institution] Korea is definitely a global university with unique features. It's not normal to think of an American university in Korea. Some people might think that it is very weird to attend it. Because it is a global university, we can get advantages both from America and Korea.

Peter also found the TNBC to be a space for cultural collaboration:

> As its main campus is in the U.S., and our university tries to embrace a lot of students who have global perspective, regardless of their nationalities, it is a global university. It creates the environment which students with various culture or races come together and harmonize together!

Both Cindy and Peter described the TNBC as being special, but Cindy was focused on unnamed benefits that came from both the home and host culture of the institution, whereas Peter specifically focused on the institution fostering a diverse environment. Though in other themes, such as Seeking More Diversity, there is a conception that the TNBC is not diverse enough, in this theme, capacitation comes from the potential of the environment to produce an outcome of diversity.

***Global liminality: Anticipating year abroad opportunity.*** All of the students at the TNBC were to attend the home institution to study for one year before their expected graduation year. This circumstance was spoken of optimistically by participants, despite some apprehension about how to thrive at the home institution over a year. The sentiments, however, were unanimously centered on capacitation that would come from living abroad for a year. When asked about the year abroad, Jennifer said "I think it is good opportunity to be in this school because it was good opportunities for people who prepare studying abroad like me." Sara also mentioned "It is good to have this campus in Korea because I can also experience staying in the [home institution city]. It is good." Mike was optimistic, saying:

> The opportunity they are giving us, you know, like the internship opportunities or even the opportunities also. The merit that we can go to [the main] campus and we can experience what it's like in [the city of] the main campus, it's also very exciting. I think that's a very good point for me to be here.

Though the participants did not go into detail about the benefits of being sent abroad, they were all positive that it would be advantageous for them. Thus, I placed this theme

within Global Liminality, as it represents an undefined claim of being or someday becoming global. This conception was common among all the participants.

***Haecceity: Learning more flexibly at the TNBC.*** Within the Haecceity variation of the Reasonably Capacitated category, the participants often described themselves as being at odds with structures and pressures in Korean society, such as compulsory adherence to age-based social hierarchies in everyday interaction. Korean universities were described by participants in this same vein as being less desirable and a hindrance to autonomy and opportunity, because they were seen as reinforcing the status quo. Participants described the Korean university as inflexible, hierarchical, and less receptive to students' personal aspirations, particularly if they wanted to study or work abroad in the future. They described both the curriculum and co-curriculum at the TNBC as being more practical in skills development, and also lenient in allowing students to focus on their individual interests and pursue courses they really wanted to take. Jenny shared her thoughts about the curriculum:

> If I remember I was Korean student, university, I think all day long Korean, they just study but it really not helpful to improve their own skills or their own ability...They just study for the test, and the Korean professor also teaches without their passion. It's possible some professor will teach and have passion, Korean professor, but also, they teach just as a work. So, that's why I felt very disappointed when I was Korean student, but I think some professors can teach well. In Korea, there is some good university, has good university, but Americans seem to like this…more effective...more, because we have to learn this English

and that means we can read or we can write all over the materials even though this material produced from, like, India or some using English country. So, we can more get the materials more abroad, but these Korean students cannot get. If they speak English well they can get, but they really don't know because this Korean university environment, limit focus on just Korea.

Cindy said that she felt learning at a North American university was more transactional than at a Korean institution:

> Well first, I think it's better to go to American university. You can learn more things. Actually, Korean university is we're just sitting there and then listening to class and then that's all. We don't have much discussion classes or debate something. Actually, many of my friends, they are attending Korean university and they say that they don't know if it's worth to pay that much money to attend those classes. They say it is a waste. They don't think they are really actually learning something.

Ashley said of the experience:

> My school's study is really flexible schedule because in high school they're really fixed schedule. Monday, we had to study Korean as like it, so my teachers said if you go university you can chose your subject and date. But I think Korean universities still they're almost fixed too but I can choose my subject here. So, for example, yesterday my first class started 5:00 PM like that, but everybody in my Korean friends are start at 5:00 and 9:00 AM, so it's different...I like here.

Jenny described the classroom experience in Korea as being one that is restrictive to both Korean instructors and their students. Her understanding was that Korean instructors just see teaching as a job and that the job is to make students study about limited topics. I am personally inclined to disagree based on my own experience in Korean education, but as I have mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, the conception is common among Koreans. In contrast, the conception in this theme is that the curriculum at the TNBC is more liberating than at a Korean university because the students feel freer. It is important to note that while this particular quote emphasizes English, the conception that the curriculum was more liberating was not limited solely to the language of the institution. The degree that students would obtain was a North American degree and the participants often associated the degree with a distinctive learning experience.

***Haecceity: Expressing more freely than at a Korean university.*** The participants felt that they were more involved in their learning at the TNBC and were able to speak candidly with faculty. This was viewed as a noteworthy aspect of North American education versus traditional Korean education, as students were encouraged to speak and share their opinions on topics in class. Rather than feeling at odds with their professors, the participants indicated that they did not have to respect any age or rank based social boundaries. Jenny said that she was able to speak her mind more freely in class:

> Actually, I'm proud of as American student because I also have experience learn to Korea education system, it's very different and this American education system is very good. Was more education gift, more academical knowledge because

> Korea is just…actually, not encourage students to express opinion or use creative thinking creatively, they did not encourage. But in this university, academic system very encourage students to express opinion, we think globally. That's why I'm proud of American school

Jenny contrasted North American experience as being more open, just as the participants did in the previous theme. However, in the previous theme, the focus was on curriculum and learning. Jenny and others specifically directed their attention here to expression and creativity and connected it to a capacity to learn.

***Haecceity: Experiencing a unique phenomenon.*** The participants explained that their experience was unlike the experience would be at another institution. Being at a foreign university in Korea meant that the participants would graduate with a degree in an environment unfamiliar to their hometown peers. Mike mentioned that his enrollment at the TNBC was a regular cause for curiosity at home:

> I actually talk, my experience a lot, with my parents and cousins…all our family members because they're really curious about this institution. Also, they all have experience in studying abroad. They were actually really interested in going to American institution in Korea and having unique experience than the students in Korean university.

Daniel found through discussion with friends and family that the TNBC he was attending was somehow different from other institutions:

> I guess, as I said, they're expecting something. Because you know, we're learning something different. It does not mean the material, or the subjects, or the major.

> It’s the environment, how we were taught, how we’re taught to think and learn and write, which is very different from Korean universities and I’m not really specific of it, or I’m not know a lot about it. But the stories I’ve heard from my friends and my peers and my dad, who is also a university professor, tells me that there is something different. And I guess that’s part of the uniqueness of it.

The contrasts in this theme were centered on the fact that the experience at the institution could be distinguished from experiences at other institutions, which is the essence of the Haecceity variation. Daniel, in this case, could not put his finger on the difference, but he knew the difference existed. Mike, rather, said that the situation was unique in contrast to the Korean university experience. Because the participants were in the first semester of their first year, they might not have been at TNBC long enough to be able to explain the differences, which could perhaps be easier after a few years attending the TNBC.

***Haecceity: Gaining a new identity.*** The participants often implied they felt dissimilar to others in Korea and that they understood themselves as being distinct. When asked if people outside of the TNBC saw her as an American student, Jenny replied:

> Actually, they don't know. If before I say, “They don’t know,” they really don't know. Their eye would be changed, it's kind of, "Who are you?" At first, "Who are you?" But if I say, then, "Oh, you are...” It’s kind of you’re so more, they give more ...they change more friendly and they're more focused, they're more focused about me...And, then if I say I am [this institution], then ask more question, give me..."What is your major?" and how about ...and kind of information.

Jean claimed that her situation was unlike that of her peers:

> I'm different from my friends. Korean friends. Most of my friends go for Korean University, but getting a foreign degree is quite kind of very different things in Korea, so I think it's kind of new identity to me...and I think it's different. I'm just a university student, I'm studying in Korea but degree is different, very much different. They are getting Korean degree while I'm getting American one, that is the difference.

The participants felt that both their institution was different and that their identity was also unique. Jenny implied that as a Korean in Korea, she would not stand out to others as being an American student, but that if she mentioned that she was, it would pique their curiosity. Jean also brought up that she was a Korean person studying in Korea, but that the degree set her apart from other Korean students. Thus, both of the participants perceived that their identity was different than it would have been if they did not attend the TNBC.

***Haecceity: Getting an American education.*** Enrolling in a North American TNBC meant being educated with North American curriculum. This theme is separate from the other themes on curriculum, because it highlights the conceptions of the students that their North American education would be more valuable. Serena, for example, mentioned that the TNBC was suitable to her for practical purposes:

> I guess the major factor for me is that I'm not used to how the Korean education system is like...Since I'm really comfortable and used to what the American education system's like and, you know, I prefer the American education system

> and I see myself going to America again and study and get my graduate degree there. That's why I prefer this school, an American school.

Mike spoke about the degree as equivalent to a degree that would be obtained at an institution in the U.S., and that it would be prestigious:

> The most merit of this university is to have equal degree as going to- not going to a university in America, [in the home city of the main campus]. Not necessarily going to America, but in here, I can get same equal degree, that would be the most merit. Most of the Korean universities is not as good as American's teaching, especially [the main institution of this campus]. So, that'd be the most merit.

Both participants found North American education to be more comfortable and superior, respectively, which is likely in part because they each had experience studying abroad. Since they had that experience abroad, I found their determination to be reliable in conveying that the education at the TNBC was distinctively North American.

***Haecceity: Being free from alcohol culture.*** Another significant dissimilarity the TNBC had from Korean universities was its detachment from Korean alcohol culture. Though it can be seen here and in the Drinking with Peers theme that the students tended to drink in groups, as is common in Korea, this theme reflects that students at the TNBC saw their drinking culture as optional rather than obligatory. Though many participants suggested that drinking was common, they overwhelmingly indicated that drinking culture at the TNBC was not obligatory and that there was less peer pressure to drink. Thus, the participants said that their experience with alcohol was unlike what they would expect at a Korean institution. Sarah said:

> I like the culture in here because in Korea there are many drinking alcohol culture. In here there's no any things in here so I really like that. Also, in Korea there are a lot of upperclassmen who treated under classmates that, "You have to do this" and, "You have to come here right now, "like that. In here, there's no any of those things so I like those things. My friend who enrolled in Korean university, she said that, "I have to go a meeting every week, every day" so she had to drink alcohol all day. She's, "I was really tired and why I have to go there," so she very confused about that...these things, they're very decreasing right now, that culture. My friend says there are a lot of bullying in... there are some major, major what is it in English? And also, there are a lot of group too. Since there are a lot of major...one major, there are a lot of students like 100. They don't have to know all the people...they make small group and they meet a lot but they drink...not very pushed but just culture...here right now there's no many groups. Also, I think many people don't like to drink alcohol in here, just my case, just my peers around me.

Cindy also spoke of drinking culture as context-dependent and with some peer pressure to be part of the group:

> We have a drinking culture but not as strict and pressure as Korean university. It depends on who you drink with like students in some major, sŏnbae, or in clubs. I drink with friends or sometimes with my club members. Sometimes we say, "Let's drink tonight," like I or someone else gather people, and then many people join for a gathering. Sometimes we have hoe-sik [a get-together] with the club.

> We don't have the pressure to drink a lot, but we do kind of get the pressure to go, like nunchi boyeo [an intense stare].

Drinking was considered by the participants to be emblematic of Korean culture, which is no different, in my experience, to how it is generally spoken about and socially enacted in Korea. Consequently, alcohol plays a significant role in the Korean undergraduate experience, and in that context, it reflects and reinforces culturally based social hierarchies (Choi, Park, & Noh, 2016). The participants described the drinking culture at the TNBC in terms of being free from these hierarchies or any obligations to drink.

***Community: Being nearby necessities.*** Within this category, themes under the Community variation represent participants' portrayals of their institution as a loose community which capacitated them with comfort and closeness. According to Jean, being close made her family less concerned about her attending a foreign institution:

> First of all, my first language is Korean, but I studied in a foreign school. So, I cannot continue to study in Korean because I can speak Korean, but I cannot speak academic Korean. It was very difficult for me, so I chose to go some American school but my parents disagree with that because I'm a girl and they really worry about me because in America no one's are there, in other country...actually, I really wanted to go to Universities in Hong Kong but my parents dislike it because no one's there. But, in Korea my relatives are there, and there are Korean friends and Korean professor. So, I said to my parents there is American University in Korea, so that's when my parents liked it. So, I came to here.

Jenny highlighted the accessibility of campus resources:

> The comfortable I think that I living dorm. The university is very close, so I can stay more time. It is very comfortable, because when I finish the class then I come to dorm just within two minutes, then I can start study. It is very comfortable. It makes comfortable environment for me.

Kate echoed Jenny, saying "Campus is really close by, so I can finish my like class and I just go to library. The distance is really close, so I like that." Participants pointed out the benefit of being nearby family, friends, and familiar surroundings. They also indicated they were pleased about their close proximity to resources on campus. Physically, the campus would take an unencumbered individual no more than fifteen minutes to walk across from north to south, or from east to west, and often without encountering any large groups of people on a typical spring afternoon. The participants unanimously described the campus as small, sparsely populated, and close to family.

***Community: Being free from worry.*** Another aspect of this category was that the small size of the campus and student population inspired a sense of independence and less apprehension about which classes to take, and about meeting new people. Many of the students felt as if they were part of a cohort, enrolled in the same courses, and involved in some of the same activities. Jay mentioned that it was no challenge to be an involved student:

> The good part is, because it's a small university, you get to do everything. You get to experience everything, something that you can't experience. Like being a president of the school will be easier, being a leader of the major like a business

> major just like the leader of the business major or doing activities or making events. You can make your own dong-ah-ree [student club]. You can make your own clubs. Like maybe those, because it's small school, you get to know everybody, and you get to join more clubs, and is less competitive to get into the club.

Cindy explained that there was little for students to worry about and that students shared the same thoughts and concerns:

> Easy is, I don't have to think a lot about my classes. I mean, they don't have many classes, so, I have to just, "Ah, this one, this one and this one." And everyone is pretty much same, every…not every, but almost all the freshmen, we are attending same classes. Just all different time, so I don't have to worry about, that person is doing that, that person is doing there. We are all actually worrying about same things.

On one end of the imaginary spectrum, the campus was seen as too small in the Hoping for Larger and Livelier Campus theme. However, in this theme, which might be at the other end of the spectrum, the small size inspired a sense of comfort.

***Summary.*** As seen through the responses from the participants, the TNBC was understood as capacitating students to varying degrees. Within the Reasonably Capacitated category, the themes were focused on advantages and disadvantages related to capacitation. The students believed themselves to be enabled to an extent, but also felt there could be improvements to their conditions, such as lower tuition, that would capacitate them even further in their pursuits.

**Category II: Peer Connected**

This category is characterized by discussions tied to the social and relational aspects of being a student at a TNBC. I use the term connected to describe the fact that identity development in this context occurs through, and as a result of interactions and dialogue, and varying proximities to other individuals, groups, and organizations (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998). The participants were focused on how they interacted, with whom, and they were aware of specific relational dynamics and intentions of tying their interactions with their personal aspirations. There was an emphasis on both relationships and time spent alone, and sometimes the roles of individuals in the interactions. Externally, the participants often indicated the contexts of their interactions, such as specific places. When viewed as a subordinate category to the capacitation of the previous Reasonably Capacitated category of description, the Peer Connected category reinforces the latter category through interaction. The capacity to develop as a student appeared to be bolstered through regular interaction.

***Initiative: Becoming involved and interacting.*** The Initiative variation in this category is discernable by discussions related to participants reaching out for interaction and connection. Oftentimes, the conversations related to what participants were doing outside of class and how their participation was intended to cultivate peer networks. Peter spoke about sports as being a catalyst for engagement with others, and interaction:

> The most comfortable place on this campus is …I think it's the gymnasium...because there are many people…it is a place where many people are participate in sports and meet many people. And I think that like the gymnasium

is a great place to meet the people I don't know. Because, most of people tried to join the clubs, sports clubs, at least one sports clubs. So, it makes more of an opportunity to meet other students and make friends.

Serena spoke about being involved in various organizations:

I do some school activities. I work...I don't work on campus but…I watched kids, I babysit. That's pretty much it so far...Right now, just once a week since it's final week grade now, but I think it's going to increase later...I wake up, I go to class. If there's a break time between I will stop by my dorm get some rest if I can, go back to my classes and after those classes if there's meetings that I have to go to school activity then...or at the school club then I will attend those...I'm [organization name] which is like an exchange program for both Korean students and exchange, I mean foreign exchange students. It's like a…it's a club where the foreign exchange students can get help from the Korean students and vice versa. I'm also part of [global-centered student organization], so we hold debates and again it's like open for both Korean and non-Korean students. And a lot of Korean students didn't know about this club. And so, by more Korean students and non-Korean students joining it creates another whole interaction...we were just planning to see how...what other steps we can take to create a better club for next semester. So, we're doing that so far.

Jean described her ideal space as being involved with the institution's student newspaper:

Most comfortable place? Global lounge maybe. Or student lounge, or there. I mean [the student newspaper]. We have some separate groups, or our [student

> organizations] and we usually go there to do our own assignment with other friends. I like that place...I write some article. That's all. We have two teams. Campus news team and international news team, and I am in the campus news team...So, I try to go every event on campus to go to know about the event, and I write article...It's fun, but it is…it was hard during the mid-term exam. I had to write two article during mid-term exam while preparing my mid-term. It was quite hard, but it is good, because my writing was horrible, but… but, through that activity my writing started to get better.

Peter emphasized the camaraderie of athletic student activities, and all three participants mentioned the positive interaction that was central to their purposes for being involved in student organizations. In most of the discussions I had with the participants, involvement was viewed as instrumental to connecting with peers.

***Initiative: Studying in groups.*** Participants also found that developing personal diligence by joining study groups would help them achieve academic objectives as part of a concerted effort. Many participants referred to group study as being a common occurrence they participated in on campus on weekday evenings. Sara said that for she and her peer group,

> Study starts at about 12:00 at night...I'm with friends...We study until six o'clock...Before a person wake up at the time before the class, then the person have to wake up friends and take them to class, because they are sleep...In Korea, students feel "I have to study harder than other students." In high school they make students study until 11:00.

When asked where she studies with friends, Sara said "In school. [At this campus], they open the school to study in the main building."

Peter described group work and peer review as a means to interact and support each other:

> In the class, we usually…if we got the assignments from professor, usually share it together to make a solutions more efficiently. If we do the assignments, we take it, we have peer reviews, just by spontaneously, and if I have something kind of problems in my assignment, my friends, my peers can just check my paper and they will say "You have some kind of problems with this." It makes me fix that. I also give kind of more the efficient way to solve those kind of assignments. So, like usually we have more interaction through the assignments. So, we do assignments together...It was a normal experience for me because I usually love to make the group studies. Usually if I have something kind of like assignments, I usually make my friends to come together and solve the problem together, because it might be more efficient because they can give their opinions about those topics. So, I can understand their, what they are thinking about and I can express what I'm thinking about. So, it can make more interaction.

Jay, like other participants, described the scene at the main campus building as crowded with students studying late into the night:

> Sometimes we'll drink and sometimes we will study. When we have projects due the next day we'll just do an all-nighter and just deliver some food to school and eat in there. And, then just study until like maybe 6:00 a.m. and then sleep for two

> hours and go to class at 9:00 a.m. Stupid, but…There's so many people. If you go to school at nighttime, it's like the second-floor classes are all full. They're all groups of people, within their groups they're all studying together.

All three of the participants showed that they took initiative to connect and work together in groups. They were confident that they could turn to their peers to collaborate and solve problems. This theme, therefore, is a clear indication of peer connection tied together with the Initiative variation.

***Exploration: Keeping a confidant.*** Within the Exploration variation, the participants discussed the nature of their interactions in terms of how they were enhancing their experience both through interactions with others and through time away from others. All of the interviewees mentioned that they had a peer group, and that they interacted with others on a regular basis. Sarah, for instance, said "I have a friend. I go to my friend who's a sophomore because more experience in here than me. I go to her and ask something."

Eun Ji described a person who she could share her feelings with:

> I share my experience with friends, and there are some friends that I along with. But, there's one person who I want to talk about my real mind, real thoughts, my real experience. So, I'm happy to have that friends. It's really lucky to me. So, I usually go to the friend and say about my story if there's something depressed, kind of like that, on that day.

Cindy talked about a peer who became close because of their same schedules and close quarters:

> I have one friend and she lives the next door of dormitory and that my classes and her classes are all same. So, we got every classes together and we also do school club together. So, we say like every day pretty much same, "This was like this, this is not good." I think I share my experiences with her.

Each of these participants had friends they could turn to for support and personal interactions. The focus of each speaker in this case was for answers to questions, sharing thoughts and opinions, and participating together in the same activities. These are all ways of exploring peer connection and developing close friendships.

***Exploration: Turning to peers for support.*** Relationships were also instrumental to participants, and the participants reached out to their peers for help. Peers were most often the first resource for receiving assistance and finding information. Daniel said he fully relied on his peers:

> I would always go see my peers usually...It was at the beginning of the semester. Just asking the questions about how the semester would go through, how should I react to all the material and the teaching? It's really that I would never really go to the professors to ask questions because mostly it's such a small community with few students and the class about 20 at average. I would ask my peers in class what was the homework or how should we do this, what was the professor expecting and things like that.

Cindy said that she received got the best advice from students further ahead in their studies:

> I know that that they have peer advisers here, but I didn't speak, I didn't have any conversation with them. So, I think I probably speak to my peer or some sŏnbae I know. Because they have more experiences here at [this U.S. institution] Korea. And then maybe if I say my worries or concerns, they will hear and then maybe they can help me to solve it and maybe they might got through the same problems I have and know it's the right solution...I know some sŏnbaes, I got close with them at gae-gahng [early semester] party, so I'll try to speak to them. Like, "Which classes I have to take on? I'm worried about this, or worried about that."

Jennifer said that she would first seek help from peers and then from professors:

> Maybe I ask the question first to my peers. Even I can't understand their…what they saying, and then I ask to my professor. They helped me...We have a summary assignment in... about the research article and I didn't know the particular part and I asked for...asked to my peers and she didn't know too. So, I asked my professor to visit her office and she explained me more detail. It really helped for me.

Peers were familiar to the participants and the participants believed at least some of their peers would have information they needed about assignments and activities. In every discussion about help-seeking, participants mentioned that they would turn to peers before all others whenever a question arose, with professors usually being the next. Speaking with peers was likely easier for the students and would allow them to simultaneously develop friendships

***Hindrance: Seeking more diversity.*** Themes within the Hindrance variation demonstrate obstructions to interaction and frustrations or unpleasant feelings associated with interactions. One issue that came up was a lack of diversity. For a number of the interviewees, this implied that the institution was not yet fully realized in terms of being truly global. When asked if her university was global, Yuca replied "Not 100%, but yes. If you want to say 'global,' you should be at least 3 or 5 nationalities. In here, the majority of students are Korean." Jean focused on the TNBC being "American," rather than global:

> I think it's an American university. It is global compared to other Korean universities, but I want it to be more global. Because I only saw American professors. But, global does not mean America. And when I saw foreign students, they were all American. So, I wish other professors or students from other backgrounds could join this university.

Participants in this theme described a campus with very few non-Koreans and few interactions with internationals, except for some of their professors from the U.S.. It is important to note, however, that participants also mentioned that the institution was global because it had the potential to bring together people from different backgrounds. Because of small enrollments at the time of the interviews, it may be the case that the institution might bring in more international students over time.

***Hindrance: Expecting peers to be more efficacious.*** Participants also bemoaned the lack of involvement and participation among their peers and classmates. Some felt that the other students around them were immature or not concerned with their studies.

Also, there was a general feeling that participation in co-curricular activities was inadequate. Jay confided that he thought many students acted too juvenile:

> All of friends, say when we talk of experiences, they all…their complaints are like how small the school is and how there's not many people in school. Even some of them said how the class is such like a high school level...They said they feel like they're not in university...A lot of them talk pessimistic...People do talk about like saying that the class is like a high school level. They really did talk about it pessimistically. But, there were a lot of like positive stuff that they talk about. A lot of them were like the activities that they can do, that's the biggest part. I still feel…I feel like I'm in high school...Like high school but different. We have more free time, we do group projects, all-nighters sometimes for midterms or finals. Other than that, I still feel like I'm in high school.

Kate was disappointed in the turnout for a cross-campus event:

> We had [a cross-campus] festival 2-3 weeks before but not that many people enjoyed. I enjoyed it a lot because I was bored and just went, but it was fun. Think these students do not like activities or festival or no expectation to it. So, they didn't really participate.

The lack of efficacy came across as a hindrance to peer connection, especially if the students were seeking to make more connections. A lack of participation would be a clear impediment to building networks of friends. On the other hand, the childishness that Jay mentioned might hinder some students more interested in intellectual connection and development, but the students he complained about may have had their own networks of

like-minded friends. Regardless, with a small student population in a limited space, it could be difficult for students like Jay to connect with others.

***Global liminality: Interacting with internationals.*** The themes under the Global Liminality variation crossing this conception were often focused on interactions with non-Korean students, who are referred to in the outcome space as internationals. There were a wide variety of interactions shared by the participants, from almost no contact to significant contact. Joshi said that it was easy to meet internationals:

> I found that there are a lots of opportunities to get closer with foreign friends. When I stay in the dorm, I can talk first to them. When I see that they need some help, I can start talking with them. Now I have a few foreign friends.

Madeline said that her involvement in a student organization put her in regular contact with internationals:

> I joined a new club, [a global-relations oriented club] at [this institution]. Met foreign friends, all from the U.S. I meet with the president, who is foreign, almost every week, sometimes for lunch and dinner. While talking with my foreign friends, I heard more about their experiences in Korea and how they feel being a foreign student at I.G.C.

Peter said that despite a low ratio of internationals to Koreans, they would make a consistent effort to collaborate:

> Actually, this Korean campus, they have more Korean students than the foreign students. But, we try to come together as possible as we can, and if they…so it doesn't matter about the number of foreign students, we just only just come

> together and so do the activities always together...Maybe, 5:2, 5 is Korean students, and 2 are…But, much can be less. Mostly it could be 10:1.

Across the full set of interviews, the participants expressed a mix of apprehension, great interest, and comfort associated with interacting with non-Koreans. The amount of interaction described by the participants was irrespective of how much experience they claimed they had living and traveling abroad; some who had been abroad for many years described that they had very little interaction with internationals at the TNBC. Within the Global Liminality variation of this category, there were other conceptions that describe encounters with internationals.

***Global liminality: Seeing internationals as separate or apart.*** Interaction between Korean and non-Korean students could also be inconsistent. Madeline said that outside of the classroom, most Korean and international students did not spend time together:

> Well, I actually have a couple of foreigner students in my classes. Most of the time I will interact with them in class but other than that, I'm not necessarily really close to them. I'll interact with them because we have group projects or something, but other than that, I don't do a lot of interacting I suppose with foreign students personally or privately...it's just…we're not that close. It has nothing to do with the fact that they're foreigners...It's just because we're not that close. I won't necessarily have a lot of private conversations with them...I know that some are here temporarily. I think one or two of them are here for a long term but I'm not exactly sure. It's just from what I've heard from like other

> students...I've seen a lot of times where the foreigner students are most likely to hang out with themselves I suppose, I think it's just because there is a language barrier or maybe a culture barrier. I'll see them just walking around campus or maybe sometimes at the subway, but other than that I'm not exactly sure where they hang out.

Mike discussed an indescribable barrier that existed between Korean and non-Korean students:

> With the foreign students, actually, a lot of the group projects, especially or even having lunch with them or even hanging out. Actually, there are not a lot of foreign students in [this institution]. It's hard to get the opportunity to be hanging out with them or do anything social. It's hard for them too. I have a lot of friends from [the city of the main campus] in this campus because I would love to hang out with them, all the foreign people or different people are mine. What they are telling me, actually, was their experience of how they came here all the way from [U.S. city] or even Venezuela or far away from here. They were telling me that, on their first day on this school, they felt really bad because they felt that there's a wall between Korean students in [this institution] and foreign students in [this institution]. You know, Korean students actually have some habit or some instinct that says don't hang out with...just with Korean people. Actually, a lot of students in [this institution], they all graduated in Korean high school and such stuff. They're not really fluent in English or even not familiar with the culture that they have, foreign students have. That's why there's like an invisible wall, should I

> say, between Korean students in [this institution] and foreign students in [this institution]. Actually, it happened really often. I've talked to my peers or even other friends in other grades. For me, actually, I would love to hang out with foreign students, but it seems like other Korean students don't really want to or don't think they are necessary to be hanging out with or interacting with foreign students. I think that's a really big problem...I actually don't feel that barrier because I love to go and hang out with Korean people. I really love to hang out with foreign students also, at the same time. Actually, it's because of my background. I've been to school and then I actually have an experience much as same as them because while I was in Germany and there was also some barriers, should I say like German people and other international students. I actually feel that I'm always empathy. That's the reason why I always try to hang out with them and I always try to connect them, Korean students and foreign students. I really try my best.

What is particularly noteworthy in this theme is that though there is an apparent lack of connection between non-Koreans and Koreans, the participants evidenced that they had certainly thought about why this was, and that they had reached out to others on different occasions. Perhaps someday they might use this understanding to make a more successful effort to reach out, because it did not seem that they had ruled out the possibility of connecting with internationals. There were mixed messages about why host country students might not interact with internationals, however and these messages echo points in Chapter Two about Koreans welcoming internationals, while without embracing

inclusion (Moon, 2016). In the given examples, some of the reasons Korean students could not connect was because of language or cultural barriers, because the international students were unfamiliar to them, and because many Korean students did not feel the impetus to connect. Mike indicated that he was able to reach out because of his own empathy of having once been an international student before. This process of determining how and why to interact with internationals evidences the ambiguity of the Global Liminality variation within this category.

***Global liminality: Finding interactions with internationals is different.*** There were some perceived barriers to communication with internationals, and the non-Korean students were seen as having some different interaction styles than Korean students. When asked about where her foreign friends are from, Kate replied:

> They're from Burkina Faso, Ecuador, and Ghana and…I don't remember, yes...I don't know why but I forgot how to make friends, like Korean friends. Because, I feel in Korea if you want to make friends you have to get their numbers and text them for a while, then go out and eat something and just spend a lot of time but here the foreigners, I don't need to do that, I just go and have lunch together and just chill...So, that makes me more comfortable to make friends. So, I think that's why I have more foreign friends.

Jean brought up the same barrier than Mike had mentioned previously, and attributed it to comfort among peers of the same ethnicity:

> When I first came to the university...I mean, I just came from India, that's three months ago. So, it was like there were so many Koreans. Who are this and what's

> going on? So, first times I usually go with some American student from [city]. And then I gradually came to be closer with Korean friend. So, I started to hang out with Korean friends more often. And then these days...I don't know why, but I think, "It is more easier to be close with Korean friends rather than other students from other country." I don't know why? And I usually...and I go to...what everybody calls that? We have some tutoring center...Right. And there are some American students. So, I go there, and at that time, I interact with some American students. What I think is that, Koreans usually go with Koreans, and Americans usually go out with Americans. Sorry. So, I think there are some invisible boundary. I don't know why, but right.

In Kate's interview, she found it easier to meet internationals because of the differences between Koreans and non-Koreans. She felt less constrained by formalities when meeting internationals, and therefore claimed to have a majority of international friends. Jean, on the other hand, found that there were differences that made it difficult to befriend internationals. Each of the speakers described two nearly opposite sides to the theme of difference.

***Global liminality: Finding common ground with international students.*** There was a liminal experience with non-Korean students overall, which was not well-defined and at times seemed not to be well understood by the participants. When asked if communication with internationals is different than with Koreans, Cindy replied:

> It's pretty much same. But they know a lot more than us because a lot of them are from [the main] campus, so they can tell us how to care…our [main] campus

looks like and what we have to prepare. But we usually say just normal everywhere life, what class sucks. "I don't wanna do that assignment. Let's go and eat something." Not that different.

Serena said that she could relate to non-Koreans based on her own recognition of the challenges Koreans face when living abroad:

I guess I like, try to interact with the international students as much as I can the way I do with the friends that I have here that are Korean students. There's some students that does the same school club activities that I do. So, I try to talk with them on those things. Because I feel like those international students, I was once like that in their country, and so them coming to our country, it's a different, it's a whole another different experience. So, I feel I can relate to them a lot more also. And so, I would talk to them about their experiences, or what their life is like in Korea, and such...there is one friend that I met through a school club, and she's from [U.S. city] and she was like telling me her experiences in Korea, and how at first it was really difficult to adjust here even though it's at an American university. The moment you step out of this campus, it's like Korea. The moment I heard that, I could apply...I can relate to those, because when I first went to America, I was stepping on to a new country that I've never been to. I have to attend school here, and I have no friends here. And so, it was easy for me to understand it, feel her struggles, because I have been the same way just in a different situation. And, so it helped me...because of that, I was trying to talk with her more about things, and try to give her much help as possible, because when I

went there, there was really no one to help me. I didn't want anyone to go through the similar things that I went through. By hearing that, I just wanted to give her as much as help as possible.

The participants were not quite sure of what their relationship with non-Koreans should be, but many of them expressed both interest and purpose in meeting international students, and implied that interactions would help enrich themselves. This implies that though the students might consider their situation to be global, many or most of them were still negotiating their own understanding of how to interact with non-Koreans, meaning they were in a liminal space of understanding.

***Global liminality: Experiencing diversity in homogeneity.*** Finally, participants found diversity in experiences and abilities among the homogenous Korean student population. They could learn from the perspectives of other students who had lived abroad for a greater amount of time and they recognized a variety of interests and lifestyles among their Korean peers. Madeline articulated this situation in detail:

> Now that I'm enrolled here, I'm really satisfied with all the classes and the experience itself, because I feel like that if I had gone to just a regular Korean University, I wouldn't have been able to...I feel like I would have felt a lot more confined in that environment. I feel like coming here, I've been able to meet a lot of different students from different backgrounds. And, I'm able to express myself, like I said before, a lot freely, a lot more freely. I think I'm really, yes, I'm satisfied with my experience here. Yes, I'm hopeful for what's going to come later on...there are some students that have just come from regular Korean high

> schools, then there are some that didn't graduate from high school. They took the Korean GED...then there are some students that have lived abroad. Some students have lived in...came from Egypt...I was able to talk with a lot to different students with different educational backgrounds...I think most of them have lived abroad because you need to have a certain English ability to enroll in the school or take classes here.

Even though there was disappointment about a lack of global diversity among the student population, there was also a sense of novelty interacting with people of the same ethnicity with different backgrounds and experiences. This was likely more comfortable for the Korean students, given the apprehension that often showed up in relation to interacting with internationals. I had anticipated this situation and mentioned it in Chapter Two. Just as international students have been shown to struggle in the U.S. because of barriers (de Araujo, 2011), international students at the TNBC in Korea likely felt some similar discomfort.

***Haecceity: Interacting Collectively in a Distinct Space.*** Under the Haecceity variation, participants often contrasted interactions within the space of their own TNBC with those of Korean or North American universities to express the uniqueness of their own institution. When asked who she normally talked about her experiences with, Sara mentioned her friends in the residence hall:

> In [this institution], students live in dormitory. Just when I have a problem, just can’t be...we can meet easily, Korean university. It is good that students can meet each other more often than in Korean university. Because most of the students

> live in the dorm. In Korean university if they live in a dorm, they are like a minority.

Daniel spoke about the uniqueness of socializing in the TNBC in Korea as opposed to being in a university in the U.S.:

> The most thing I worried about going to American University was you're eating sandwiches all week...Rural school cafeteria is like, it sucks...But here, it's the food I like, the culture, the music I listen to, the movies I see and the people that I socialize with. It creates that comfortable environment. Whereas if I was in America…just for an example: I would say if you were to go to your party, in a Korean party, you would play all together. You would socialize all together as a group. As just a group till the end of the year. In America, where individual is valued, you go to the party, everybody is there. Everybody is there but they're playing in individual groups...him talking to her, and then you have on the other side, him talking to him. Then that kind of…if you're not used to it, you have to hear people. You have to ask people while but here, people come to you. It's much easier to socialize, but it's a comfortable factor.

Sarah contrasted her experience with Korean universities by explaining that there is a more thriving residence life at the TNBC that allows for more socializing. Daniel, on the other hand, contrasted the TNBC with institutions in the U.S., where he felt socializing was far less collective than in Korea. Both of them found the situation at the TNBC to be comfortable for different reasons, and both indicated that the TNBC was unique because of the collective interaction it fostered.

***Haecceity: Being Among Koreans who Lived Abroad.*** Many of the participants believed that students of the TNBC had prior experience abroad, which made them distinct from students at other institutions. Serena said it was easier to socialize because she was not the only one with experience abroad:

> If I was in a Korean university, almost every student will be a student that studied solely in Korea or maybe like studied in abroad not that long. And, I will be the only one that will stand out as someone who solely studied in America, just came here and don't know anything about the Korean society or the Korean education system. For me, studying at a American campus in Korea, although there are some things that are...some Korean aspects that I don't know about that they have here, there are more students that are like me who studied abroad. And so, it's less awkward for me and I have more people that I can kind of talk to and they would be able understand, compared to if I was at a Korean university. And, if I tell someone about how it was like in America, they wouldn't be able to understand because that's not the system that they grew up in.

Minnie made a similar point, saying "I think here, students is Korean, but they went study abroad, so their mind is little diverse...I can get along with diverse culture students."

The Experiencing Diversity in Homogeneity theme might seem quite similar to this theme, but the difference is that in this theme, the TNBC was believed to be unique for the fact that it seemed to have a majority of students who had lived or studied abroad. Because of this, the students felt they could relate to each other more comfortably than if they were at a Korean university.

***Haecceity: Experiencing Less Hierarchical Relationships.*** A purported difference between the TNBC and Korean universities was the absence of rigid social hierarchies within peer groups at the TNBC. Madeline talked about how a blend of North American and Korean cultures at the TNBC made for a relaxed social environment between differently aged peers:

> In terms of sŏnbae relationship, it's pretty much, I'm going to say it's the same, because I think in Korean universities it's a lot more strict, but here because there is a mixture of American culture and Korean culture, it's a lot more lenient, I would say. For example, a sŏnbae won't necessarily go to you and be like, "Do my homework." Or, when in terms of drinking, a sŏnbae won't really force you to drink a certain amount. But, in Korean universities, if a sŏnbae asks a hoobae to drink a certain amount of alcohol, then you would have to drink it because you're a hoobae. But here, you're not really going to have that sort of culture. When I first started experiencing gaegang parties [semester start parties], that would be like parties with alcohol, none of the sŏnbaes forced any of the students to like drink.

Cindy shared very similar sentiments:

> We have sŏnbae and hoobae, but not that strict compared to Korean universities...Because, there are many people who studied abroad, like people who kind of had open minded. And also, we have a lot of transfer students and we have Spring students and then Fall students, like Korean they have only Spring students. So, Fall students, it's only transfer, so we actually don't have the border

> line between like first semester, second semester, first year, second year. So, we don't have the right concept of sŏnbae or hoobae. And people really don't like it, like strict things...It's American University, and then we really don't care, sŏnbae or hoobae. We just hang out all, together.

Participants felt they could communicate freely with each other without being required to fulfill demands and requests of older peers. Rather than being restrained by a hierarchy, the participants could connect with peers more freely. There was little mention about how students determined they did not need to establish hierarchical relationships, but Cindy made it evident that because the institution was not Korean, and because it ran on a different enrollment schedule, it seemed like such a system would not emerge at the TNBC.

***Community: Being part of a family.*** The Community variation has the greatest number of themes in this category. A difference from North American universities expressed by the participants was that students at the TNBC were like a family, rather than being part of a large and intimidating institution. It seemed that the conception of universities in the U.S. was that they were so large that it would be difficult to meet other students and make friends. Participants who had considered attending American institutions each mentioned that they were quite satisfied by the small amount of students at the TNBC and claimed that it assuaged their intimidation of being surrounded by thousands of strangers. This feeling extended beyond kinship among students to closeness with faculty in and out of the classroom as well. Serena talked about how the smaller classes at the TNBC were more comfortable:

> I think what's easy is I like how the campus is small. And, as a first-year student, for me it's…if I was at an American university, it would have been intimidating for me to walk into a class where it's like a big lecture hall, and you don't have time to talk with your professors as much. But, here with the smaller classrooms, you get to know each and every student, and you get to interact with everyone. You get to even take time and talk to your professor about something.

Daniel also spoke about the advantages of a smaller campus:

> I guess, it makes this kind of small community as a kinship, as a family, which really comforts the students' feelings. Especially if you're a freshman because a lot of students who go to big, big city universities, where they have 3,000 students in the campus. You're alone. You step into the campus and there are people swirling and surrounding around you. And you don't know anybody, and you have to engage and meet people. But it's not an easy thing to do for everybody, to have the courage to do that. And especially with about 200 students in each class and you're busy and all that. And it's a lot of international students that have difficulties at American campuses around the country. And a lot of them dropped out.

William said that the small campus brought faculty closer to students more casually:

> Just family...We eat lunch or dinner together watching sports...Professors come too everywhere the students to participate. The professor...every professors in G.M.U just playing, they…I feel that they want to play with students...Yesterday there's a soccer with some Korean school mates for the campus universities.

> Professors come to gym and play with us, with the student...Yes, talk and it was fun.

Peter said that being at a small campus allowed students to be more of a collective:

> As this school is kind of small size, there are few students, very small size of students, so I think that we, all the students can be friends together, and I think that we might be much more than family...We all, I think…this is kind of advantage of this university because the small size of the students makes much more cohesive together. ..so much more interesting understanding each other could be...if the students total, students like are over like 10, 000 it might be hard to become friends together and just…I might be feel like kind of isolation because there are so many peoples but I cannot find the true friends. However, like if this is a small size, so I can meet various types of people and have more opportunity to have a communication of all the students. So, like through those activities we can be much more friendlier and become as a part of a family.

Though the small size of the campus is shown earlier as a hindrance in the Reasonably Capacitated category, on another end of this spectrum, the focus was on how the size contributed to a feeling of closeness and community. Interestingly, Serena saw this as a contrast to her conception of the large campus a U.S. university would be. The small campus enrollment size was frequently reported by the participants to have created a family feeling where students could form deeper relationships and feel secure in knowing they would have others to turn to and spend time with.

***Community: Hanging out in groups.*** Participants also described occasions where they would interact with and go out in peer groups, often with classmates in the same programs. This meant that participants associated with certain members of the population rather than trying to meet people outside of their everyday sphere. Thus, they claimed to have close friends and not an extensive network of close connections. Cindy, for example, said that students most often had their own peer groups:

> Well, I think I'm quite close with my peers. Like, pre-orientation, [orientation], and M.T. [Membership Training, a Korean-English term meaning team-building outings] So, I think, there are a lot of students in [major], but I actually don't have a lot of opportunities to talk with all of them, just a few students. Also, there are [remedial English language program] students. They are almost attending same classes. So, they are really close with each other. And, so, I don't have a lot of…I think we only play within our own group. So, it's hard to play with other people outside my group.

Eun Ji, on the other hand, said that students also liked to be part of larger groups to interact with more people:

> This period, like one month passed, so there are lots of…We gather together like in large groups, so we can try with various students. And, yesterday we went out to dinner, because one student's birthday is Saturday, tomorrow. So, we went out and having dinner together. And after that, go to singing room, hang around.

Cindy focused on smaller groups of peers who found each other through common associations, such as being in the same class, whereas Eun Ji described large groups with

a more changeable set of members. Both conceptions indicate that there were connections made among peers in a community.

***Community: Drinking with peers.*** Drinking was also common among peer groups, and the participants said they would go as a group to drink. I had assumed that drinking habits would most often be traditionally Korean, meaning that students would drink as a social group, possibly never alone, and most often to celebrate an event or accomplishment. I tried not to lead the participants into making that claim, but I did ask the nature of their drinking culture and my assumptions were confirmed. Jean pointed out that students would drink wherever a place was available:

> I think because there was a freshmen welcoming party and we had a party in a sool jip [drinking establishment] near the campus. We do not drink on campus, but we have a culture to drink. Even during midterms after each exam, they go to drink. I even saw people drink on campus, in the school building, even though it is not allowed. But there were no professors or guards, only students are there at night. I heard their shouting. We went, and I saw they were drinking. Even sŏnbaes said they drink on campus because it's near and safe.

Cindy indicated that students often switched languages while drinking in groups:

> We speak in English really sometimes. One interesting thing is when people get drunk, they all speak English...I think it's their habit...I don't do a lot, but I do speak English in some…just only a few sentences. But there are many people who speak English when they get drunk.

Because alcohol consumption often leads to unpredictable outcomes, there are likely a multitude of reasons students would speak English more often when drunk. I surmise this phenomenon would tie in with the tendency for Koreans to drink together in close groups, which I have personally experienced as a social bonding experience in which people can be more open about their thoughts and feelings. Because these students were studying and socializing with each other on a regular basis, it is possible they might try on a whim to open up conversations in English, perhaps for amusement, to show off, or as a strategy to come closer to their peers within a new intercultural context. Regardless, the participants expressed that drinking with peers was a way to connect with others and relieve stress. Further, the fact that they would drink on or near campus shows they felt safer being near their peers and in a common environment than to separate themselves from the group.

***Community: Engaging with friends.*** None of the participants claimed to spend their time friendless and alone, except for instances when they wanted privacy or down time, and many of their pursuits were carried out with peers. When asked what he likes to do in his free time, Jay said

> There's Triple Street in front of our school. I always go there and maybe study and eat. I don't really do much like maybe...With friends. With other friends, always with friends. Maybe play ping pong or work out together, watch a movie, practice together, practice.

Another example is where Sara said she liked to be active with her peer group.

> I don’t do any activity in about group, but just health or when there’s a concert, I’ll go and see...with friends...to diet, lose 5 kilograms...At healthcare center...Like running or bike or like that...Cycles, running machines, about muscle machines. When I go there, about 10 people. Like, 10 pm is the most crowded time. I like running.

According to the participants, peers were present for activities such as studying, for shopping trips, for drinking, and even exercise. Being part of a community meant that the students could easily connect with others and experience places on and near the campus.

***Community: Helping peers.*** The participants also said they looked out for their peers, trying to help others wherever possible. If peers struggled with assignments, participants would tutor them and offer guidance. Jennifer said “I'm good at math than other students. I tutor other students who don't understand their math, so it made me important in this school...They come to me and ask questions.” When I asked Jennifer how she was adept at math, she said

> Korean high school has two ways to classes, it is called moon-gwa [social sciences] and ee-gwa [language study], it is study about social science and languages like that and I studied about math and science. I told that I was applying, and I studied mathematics a lot during my high school life so they thought I am good at that...Before the day of test, I help about 10 students.

When asked how she helps others, Joshi said

> In school, maybe I can be kind of who do in front the kind of, I don't know, counsel? Maybe when I go more higher in grade? For example, there is Chinese

> class some people who never study Chinese they really hard...have hard to pronounce it. I kind of talk to them and have a meeting to teach them...Not teach, kind of tutor...I learned Chinese only few months, I'm willing to help others.

Both of the participants in this example were happy to reach out to help peers by using their prior experience with subject matter. This theme coincides with the Turning to Peers for Support theme, where participants claimed they would go to peers first. However, the Turning to Peers for Support theme is placed in the Exploration variation because it exemplifies students reaching out for support in different ways.

***Community: Interacting across institutions.*** There was also interaction across the campus with students from other TNBC institutions. Some of the participants had peers from their high schools back home at the other campuses and there were interactions that took place at large events and sports matches. Nicole mentioned that she had a friend in one of the other TNBCs at the complex:

> I think a lot of…I love to watch other people's behaviors or speaking, or I love to listen other people story. I met one of my friends who studied in [another nearby U.S. TNBC] ...the friend was my senior in my high school and she has the same classroom teacher with me, so when I was so stressful to decide my university, the teacher advised me about her story…using her story so I wrote her.

When asked what activities he does outside of class, Mike responded by saying

> Actually, that's a good point, because I play soccer with people from [this institution] or even [two other nearby U.S. TNBCs]. We gather all together in different universities. We all gather around in the same gym. All the foreign

> students come, too. All the Korean people come, too. With playing sports, we become unified or become one. Not necessary foreigner or Korean. We all come together. We're all playing around. Yes, that's what we do, outside activity. Also, with the male student or female student, I don't care, or foreign student, we all hang out and have couple of beer and we all become best friends...We actually go to Campus Town. It's not far away, two blocks away from the campus. That's where we mostly go...There are a lot of bars or even Korean restaurant there. They sell beers and Korean drinks. Yes. That's what we do...When foreign students involved...we do have international style of the drinking environment, but when we hang out with just Korean people, then yes, it's all Korean style...it's sort of different.

In some discussions, it felt that the participants found the most globally interactive experience when meeting students from the other on-site institutions, as both Korean and international students were present. Nicole's friend was an acquaintance from before she enrolled at the TNBC, whereas Mike said he would regularly meet students the other institutions at sports events. The friends could be either Korean, international, or both, and Mike expressed that he was open to the opportunity to meet anyone with similar interests.

***Summary.*** The Peer Connected category shows the relational experience of students at the TNBC. There were notably less hindrances within this category, though it is important to consider that the themes related to interaction with internationals present some challenges to a notion of full global interaction. The participants showed no

struggle to communicate with each other and make friends, but there was certainly some tension for many participants in trying to associate with internationals. However, the participants also indicated that the internationals appeared to have many of their own social groups.

**Category III: Adapting and Becoming**

The final and foundational category was one in which participants were enrolled at the TNBC with diverse anticipations, that could be either affirmed or denied through experience, and where they could navigate their way through a new environment. The participants focused on how they had initial expectations that were contradicted or had been misguided, or on how they were starting to get used to a new experience or way of life. In other cases, the participants talked about what they had to do to adapt and conform to their conceptions of new environment. This category, in a sense then, reflects adapting and becoming as a means for students at a TNBC to develop their identities. Pyvis and Chapman (2005), addressing identity development among graduate students at a TNBC, found that "offshore students seek identity as members of the educational community through pursuing local ways of belonging, such as 'fitting in' to peer and cohort groups and developing fellowship with lecturers and supervisors" (p. 51). This finding is consistent with Baxter Magolda's (2001) finding that university students

> are learning to be adaptive—being able to read and navigate external environments to make choices in context. They are able to do so because they are beginning to use their internal foundations to make sense of their experience and influence their lives. (p. 185)

The difference in this study is that the participants were first-year students, and many had very limited experience with postsecondary education. Therefore, I assume their adaptation was likely far-less of a meta-cognitive experience than it would be for a graduate student newly enrolled at a TNBC. The external horizon of the participants' conceptions was the specific resources and settings for their adaptation. Participants at times described making use of resources such as spaces and peers to adapt, which connects to the other categories, whereas adaptation and becoming are the main foci.

***Initiative: Developing studentship.*** One of the first qualities of many interview responses that I noticed in the analyses were indications of behavioral adjustments that participants claimed to have made after enrolling at the TNBC. The adjustments in this theme were related to diligence to be a student. The participants described actions, routines, and traits necessary to succeed academically and socially. Another adaptation, thus, was being more involved as a student to improve as both a student and as a person. An example of this came from Ashley, who said

> There's one professor, I will not tell her name, she has given very many homeworks. But then my friends here don't do her homework because it's really too much. But I try to do all of them because I'm not give up if I can do that. So that personality is helping me to do well in this university...sŏng shil hahm [sincerity].

Ellen described improving her attentiveness:

> I think attention is important when I'm studying here because Korean university, they don't have any participation scores but in here we have lots of lots of things

about that. You need to share our opinions a lot and have a presentation and many people in front of it, yes, active attention.

Sarah was focused on time management:

> I'm trying to manage my time...That is difficult. Well, I went to academy last year to involve in all year. They have scheduled for the...for me like end classes and every self-study time. I never managed that, my time. What right now I do things, and this is kind of difficult for me but I'm trying my best right now.

The adaptations of studentship mentioned in these examples express diligence, active attention, and time management, and each of the adaptations were prefaced with verbs such as try and need. These words indicate an active attempt to behave in a way that will lead to success in the TNBC. This is somewhat similar to the Learning through North American Curriculum theme, but here the focus is on deliberate behavioral changes, whereas in the former theme the focus is on how the curriculum is different.

***Initiative: Becoming involved.*** Participants also talked about how they were trying to be more involved and participate. Sarah said she was trying to be active in class:

> Well in here, I try to talk more like participated in class. Well, since because right now I'm a [remedial English program] student so I think I need to be more speaking, more...I need to study more English. I try to speak out in many friends because this can be a good time to speak fluently in English...Because I never study. I study English only for suneung [the Korean university entrance examination]. I never study TOEFL, TOEIC, TEPS, or anything like that.

Eun Ji described becoming more active to be more successful at the TNBC:

> Before here…I can say the most important part of my identity is: consistent, and calm, like not active…active student. But in here I want to be the student who are active in all things. I want to…like I said, I want to experience various kinds of things than I did. So, I want to be active in the class, in my grades. Also, I want to be really active in my club, or my friends…and other kinds of things.

I determined that Eun Ji was describing in her interview a personal desire to adapt to the context and environment. It is possible that she might attempt to actuate this desire over time, but at the time of the interview, she did not express any specific intention to be more active. If she did, she might or might not find she would be capacitated to pursue specific activities. Thus, rather than fitting within the Reasonably Capacitated category, I found that she expressed a personal sentiment that she would like to become more active than she was before, in order to adapt to the environment.

***Initiative: Studying outside of class.*** Scattered across responses to interview questions was the experience of studying outside of class. Jean described her situation:

> I study alone. I review each courses. After classes I try to review the class materials and all and then I do my assignment. I do not study that hard, but I try to review all of my classes and things. What I think is that I only want to study with others like my friends and my peers, but it is not that much helpful to me because I really want to hang out with them when I be with my friends, so I try to study alone in my room.

Ashley said that studying was more important than trying to adjust:

> Actually, I'm thinking about this topic because my professor gave a assignment for about this. So, I had thinking about this. I think I am good. I'm doing well in here. I'm proud of myself, so I expect I can do better. Actually, I'm in the adjust here right now, but I can adjust here later...I think most important is studying hard is good, because it will just worrying about my English skills. I can improve, so I think studying hard is the best way.

Studying outside of class was conveyed among different contexts that fit the other two categories as well. For example, the participants sometimes described study as a means of interaction with peers under the Peer Connected category. Within the Adapting and Becoming category, studying outside of class was expressly for personal development and improvement, rather than connecting with others in the previous category. This meant the participants sometimes studied outside of class by themselves.

***Initiative: Overcoming language obstacles.*** Language differences were a challenge for students, but participants described their effort to improve English skills efficiently. Peter, for example, described some strategies:

> Of course, it's like the second language that I use. My national language is Korean and most of courses are organized in English. Because most of the foreign professors speak English very native, because the pronunciation might be quite difficult to understand, or like the pace of speaking could maybe difficult to be too hard to understand. However, that is the most difficult thing I have. I just think I will face throughout this semester. However, I'm going to overcome these difficulties through just...keep contacting professors, how to overcome these

> difficulties, and like learn various stuffs from like other foreign classmates. So, I don't think there's much big deal of overcoming those difficulties?

Eun Ji said that her lack of English skills made interaction difficult, but that she could feel better when setting those feelings aside and making an effort:

> I said that I feel really proud of myself when I'm using English with others. But still, there's like difficulties doing with English. I can realize that there are many people who are really good at English and there's many people who did study English, studied English for a long time. So, I realized that one...day by day. But, that is kind of like difficult. That feeling can make me like disappointed, and "oh my gosh, I have to try really hard." That can be some kind of like disappointing feelings, but I feel really happy when I overcome that. Like, little moments.

Both Peter and Eun Ji expressed that they realized the challenges they faced being among students already adept at English or being in classrooms where professors spoke English at a high level. Peter resolved to overcome this obstacle by connecting with internationals. Eun Ji expressed that she saw her own progress in "little moments." Both participants conveyed a similar message shared by many participants about learning English at the TNBC.

***Exploration: Seeking help.*** The Exploration variation within this category represents personal betterment and problem solving. The participants discussed help-seeking preferences in response to the interview questions. I suspected there would be help seeking behaviors within the ecosystem because an underlying premise behind human ecology is seeking resources, but I did not know how the participants would claim

they seek help, or from whom they would seek support. The students reported a range of sources of support depending on what they were hoping to accomplish. Some claimed to go to peers, others mentioned that they turned to professors, or the student affairs office. Jennifer said that she could claim help from friends or professors:

> Maybe I ask the question first to my peers. Even I can't understand their...what they saying and then I ask to my professor. They helped me...We have a summary assignment in...about the research article and I didn't know the particular part and I asked for...asked to my peers and she didn't know too. So, I asked my professor to visit her office and she explained me more detail. It really helped for me.

Joshi said that she could turn to her professor at any time:

> There is a English course professor. I had really hard time because it's hard to write essay like right after here, even first draft is have to write 500 words and it's really hard to me, and essay form it's not familiar to me. I went to his office really often, but he never kind of show me it's…I can say he never reject me, no he always welcome to me and he really try to help even specific things and through the tutoring even console my life.

Kate said that she would get immediate feedback from advisors:

> I think they have nice advisor so then they're available like mostly every day. So, like I recently went there for summer courses and asking about it. Even if I have small questions from my textbook or something, I just go to professors because they're available...So, if I just send an email, they respond really quick.

Though Jennifer's claim could fit into the Turning to Peers for Support theme under the Peer Connected category, it was included here instead because Jennifer specifically stated that since her peer did not know the answer, she specifically sought another resource. I qualify this as an adaptation, because it indicates she navigated the environment to find the resource she needed. Joshi described a specific story with her professor who offered consolation but did not directly show how to do the work. This might indicate she found a comfortable rapport with the professor, as Kate also did, which might connect with other themes such as Utilizing Approachable Faculty.

***Exploration: Finding spaces.*** Participants also described the spaces they sought in response to the question of which places were the most comfortable on campus. Though I thought of spaces as either physical or conceptual, the participants described only physical spaces. One of the human ecology terms from Chapter One is "space" (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) which is what the participants referred to in their descriptions. Mike said

> Where I feel the most comfortable is, probably I'll say, school building, our school building. Actually, it's all new and all people get around. It's actually open 24 hours, so we can study whenever we want or we can gather and chill whenever we want to. The building itself is not recognized as such a strict school building but it's some sort of friendly environment where every student can do pretty much whatever they want to. It's become a friendly atmosphere. This building is the most comfortable place for us.

Yuca described the residence hall as being her ideal space:

> The most comfortable place of course, dormitorium...Now I'm living in dorm...and the library as well. Because I have my own time there. In dorm, I can take a rest without any interference. And if I want to focus or want to concentrate to my study or some assignments, the library is the best place.

Kate said the most comfortable place on campus was

> Library...Because I go there often and there is not that many people and the space is huge, they have like, the ceiling is high...I just go there alone...Almost every day...Three hours to five hours...I normally review the classes and just do some assignments.

The participants found places that were ideal to them. The thread of commonality between the spaces was that they were all places for studying or rest. Whether they described comfortable places as being places for everyone with many people or alone in their residence, the participants for the most part described a space conducive to study and relaxation.

***Exploration: Developing independence/autonomy.*** Finally, participants spoke within this variation about developing a sense of independence and the capacity to live on their own. This could mean because they were living away from home, apart from former friends and family, but also that they had to pursue resources and make decisions themselves. The fact that they did have to make their own decisions separates this theme from other themes such as Living Free from Parental Control, which is a theme that focuses more on the freedom from strict guidelines. For the participants, this was a new

way of life that they were not accustomed to. When asked what aspect of her identity is important to her as a student at the TNBC, Jean said

> Independence, because university here, they never provide me, in front of me. I have to find...I have to work for it. But in Korean university, they prepare everything, and they can ask you to do this, this, this and you don't make it for you. I think this course …everything else prepared, but for me, I have to find out. I have to go to professor and ask actually. They never told me first. I have to go to professor, but it will be good. "Please gave me some recommendation." They don't gave me, and I have to work out to find some opportunity I have. I think that independency is a personality students should have to study in this university...I'm B.A. Economic student. Bachelor of Arts. Many people in this school recommend me to switch my major to B.S. Science, Bachelor of Science Economics, but I don't know the differences. I've been to [the student affairs office] and they told me, "Go to your professor", and they just told me there's just difference in mathematics. When I went to professor, he is not a full-time faculty and he said, "Oh, I do not know about that. Go to full-time faculty." I go to another professor and he explain everything. Then I got to know about my major. The reason I choose BA was I do not want to study mathematics anymore. Well, I got to know the difference of B.A. and B.S. is not only the mathematics, so to get to know about major and to study well, students should be independent. They have to go to professor and go to some office to get to know about something.

Peter said that he would stay at the campus throughout the semester to feel like he was a student studying abroad:

> I tend to just live in this campus until the semester, because I don't feel I need to go to my family every weekend, because I decided to study abroad. So, in order to become a study abroad student I need to get far away from my families. So, I tend to just always be here in the dormitory...Because by just always staying in this dormitory, there are no chance to meet families because they live very far away, not quite far away, but they live in, they live a distance from this university. So, all of the things I need to do independently. So, it makes me feel…living independently, and I need to take responsibility of my lifestyle. So that makes me feel like I am studying abroad.

In Peter's case, he self-selected to be responsible by making the conscious decision not to go home and visit family. His newfound independence was in part because of his deliberate choice to find self-reliance. Jean's adaptation was more of an act of navigating her environment to find the resources she needed.

***Hindrance: Seeing a lack of effort.*** The Hindrance variation in this category highlights detractions at the institution that were difficult to endure. These perceived struggles made it difficult for participants to have a sense of adequacy and fulfillment, and had the potential to impede their adaptation. The participants implied that they were obstructed by the attitudes of others, a long commute, an unrealized campus infrastructure, and uncertainty about their own purpose for enrolling at the TNBC. More specifically, one of the hindrances was what participants described as a lack of

determination or a poor attitude among students. Participants struggled to understand how some students failed to care about their work, failed to participate in activities, and seemed to lack the qualifications to be enrolled at the TNBC. This caused participants stress and irritation and in response it became a point of defining their relationships and interactions. Jay found group projects to be a struggle:

> Well, what's hard is group projects. Professors will...of course, any university will have group projects all the time but when I was in my business class the professor will give us...he would like make a group for us. We don't get to pick...we don't get to choose a group but when I first did the group, there were four people including me. Two of them don't speak English, which means it will either take them long time or either me and the other person carrying on the group, doing every work. That's one of the hard part. If somebody can't speak English, they can't really help within the group. I can't only focus on one project, I have to focus on other classes, but because of them, I have to do more work, do more research, do more writing. Something that they can't do. That's hard. It's like some other people can't speak English. I don't care if they can't speak English. I don't care if they can't do it, but as long as were in the group, I wish the others would help. Like, I don't know. I feel like when they come into American University, I expect them to speak English. So, that was the one of the hard part. Group part is the hard part. For example, when I had another group project in Business 100 that some of them don't even come to the meeting when you're meeting with their

groups. I'm…about that like, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sick today I can't go." No progress in the group. I have to do all the work.

Daniel said that the mindset of students is what defines the qualities of higher education institutions:

> The only thing, and I was actually expecting this too, was I believe that the difference between a high-quality university and a low-quality university is the quality of the students. That's the only difference. Even if you're at Harvard or at [this institution], I believe that the professor's level is the same because, they all did the coursework and PhD to get that level and at the job of a professor. It's just the differences of teaching style and different material and what the universities wants for each professor, but differences of the environment and the culture, that's a students' thing. What are the qualities of the students? How well are they engaged in the material? How passionate are they about their education? Here, honestly to say, it is true that not all the students are not coming here to study. They just...It's like, "I came to University so I'm done." That's a Korean mind basically, because of all the struggles they had gone through high school. I don't know. I've never been through it so I can't tell you specifically about it but through my friends. It's a pain. They struggle and struggle, and try to get to university, and then the minute that they're accepted, they're like, "Oh, I'm done". For their whole life, they've been trying to go to university. That's the last goal their parents try to make that. Throughout their early education life, they never think about next. A lot of students here have a similar mind which creates a

> lesser-engaged classroom atmosphere, but on the other side of that factor, it makes students who are engaged in learning much more easier to identify for a professor...there's very few, it's easier to identify, "Oh, them. That person really wants to learn this material." That person is coming to the classroom with the mind of being humble and wanting to listen to the professor's experience.

While this theme appears quite similar to the Expecting Peers to be More Efficacious theme, this theme is concentrated on a perceived lack of diligence in the classroom. Both participants in the example connect a lack of effort with a lack of engagement or cooperation. I suspect that this issue is not unique to a TNBC, because I have heard similar frustrations about classmates throughout my academic and professional career. However, this was a conception held widely enough among the participants that it needed to be included as an aspect of the TNBC experience.

***Hindrance: Facing a difficult commute.*** There were very few commuter students at the TNBC. Those who were thought it was difficult to spend as much time with peers or be able to partake in group study sessions because of the distance of the campus, unless they lived in one of the large, recently developed apartment buildings nearby. The consensus of the participants was that it would be optimal to live on campus and be able to fully participate in the environment. William wished that he could live on campus, rather than commute:

> I want to live in dormitory...It's so comfortable...I have a morning class at 9:00 AM and then I have to wake up at 6:00 AM at home but the students living in the dormitory, they, they just wake up at 8:50. I want to live in the dormitory like the

> friends...I always feel that emotions because I sleep this just for this today, in the dormitory, for this test, but I got home. They study with a group, but I have to study alone at home. They played together but I have to go home. They still call and that feeling…not only my friends, the students in junior, they almost live in campus. Just maybe students. For my student, there are only two friends that live in campus. But one is living in this apartment, one lives in just far from two stations, the subway station...not far like me...My friend lives in a two-people room but he doesn't have a roommate. There is the empty bed. I sleep there before...Maybe several hours so I go his dormitory and sleep or study...When I leave something, like assignments or notables, I have to go home and then take it. But leave it at dormitory, there's just...Take five minutes. It is comfort. I think just dormitory is the perfect place for me.

There have been years of research conducted by higher education researchers related to the marginalization of commuter students (e.g., Bean & Metzner, 1985; Kodama, 2002), and William's expressions illustrate the challenge of a long commute by public transportations. From the interviews across participants, it was clear that living in the residence hall was the norm, and very few participants claimed they were commuter students. However, participants did mention that some of the upperclass students did commute with private vehicles.

***Hindrance: Being unsure of their decision.*** Participants also spoke of how they were unsure of why they had enrolled at the TNBC as opposed to another school and at times mentioned they, or other students were planning to transfer elsewhere. Some of the

reasons for potential attrition were struggles to adapt to being an ideal North American student, the price of enrollment, and concerns related to the sustainability of the TNBC. When asked about her performance in school, Cindy said

> I think it's...I'm not good. I submit my assignment late and then I didn't go to my class two times, twice. Also, I really have the feeling that, I don't know if it's a right decision to come here to [this U.S. institution in] Korea. I'm still wondering, can I still attend this school? ...actually, I was planning to go to Korean university and then I knew this University. Then I applied, and I got in, but it is an American university and I was worried about because I'm not suck at English but I'm not that good at English to follow university education. I thought it's too hard for me to do. Also, I have the fear going to America and I will live in abroad alone not with...I lived in New Zealand with my family, not only me. So, yeah, that kind of things.

When asked what getting a North American degree meant to her, Erin replied "I don't know because I plan to transfer...I don't know. Not yet. Not decided yet." She mentioned that the biggest concern was money. Cindy's testimony shows that not everyone perceived the experience to be appropriate for their own pursuits. This theme might slightly connect with the Concerned about Uncertain Outcomes theme, because a focus of the dialogue is doubt and uncertainty. However, Cindy indicated a struggle to adapt and Erin stated that she already planned to transfer out of the TNBC, which are conceptions that fit into this theme of Hindrance to Adapting and Becoming.

***Global liminality: Struggling with English.*** Global Liminality within this category encompasses the participants pondering their endeavors to be part of a global setting, in which language and culture were often different from the nation outside. I approached the study of this phenomenon with the understanding that it was going to be a place of multiple cultures, norms, and languages. This, I felt, would be insight best learned from the students living out the experience and finding their place in it. In this intersection of category and variation, the responses to multiple interview questions implied a reality where students wrestle with what they consider to be appropriate language use in context and how they identify as ethnically Korean in a North American school, both within the institution and outside.

A prerequisite for enrolling at the TNBC was a certain level of English fluency, as the classes and official communications were all to be in English. When I planned to recruit participants, there was initial institutional reluctance about soliciting documents translated into Korean, because it might contradict the guarantees of the institution to provide an English-only environment. At the TNBC, where English inability and lack of comprehension could have real consequences for enrollment, participants shared how they were trying to come to grips with using English in the classroom and making adaptations.

The participants also said that outside of the classroom, most of the students spoke to each other in Korean. Furthermore, they claimed that many students spoke with each other in Korean in the classroom as well, a situation they approached both positively and negatively. In some ways, it helped them bond with other students, but it also had the

consequence that students felt they were not improving their English ability as well as they should. Sarah spoke about a struggle to be part of class discussions:

> Difficult is speaking English. Yes. Well, I can think a word in Korean but I cannot speak out in English. I just make, "What is that in English?" like the...there's a class, Business 100, there a lot of discussion timing that the class but I just can't come out with in English. I just can't keep in mind in Korean. It was really tough...In academic area...When I asks some questions to professors, yes I was, "Oh. Uh," like this. I cannot explain to them. So, it was really tough, but I did it.

When asked how she interacted peers in the class, Erin said

> Just anytime, because I like talking...If my place is here, I go in to there, talking. If the professor came our class, I go back talking with my partner...During the lecture, some professor don't like [us speaking Korean], so we use English. My peer doesn't like...Doesn't like speaking English, because everyone is [remedial English program] They just have same mind with me. We're not good at in English, so we're better not to use English...I spent five years to speak English, but it's still, because I'm not improving I think...I always using Korean...I was nervous just ...even if I use English, I think I'm not improving better, so that's the nervous point. "Why I'm using English?" like that.

Serena said she was concerned she could lose some of her English ability by being immersed in Korean:

> I guess, not many students are…I was hoping that I could be able to speak English here and just continue everything, but there's a lot of Korean students

who just speak in Korean. So, at first, it was a little hard for me because I was hoping to keep remembering English and try not to forget it here. That's something that has been hard for me. The classes are like spoken in English, and outside the class, you all speak in Korean. It's just a little hard for me to switch up language...The way that they teach is really similar with how my high school was like. When it comes to English classes, the basic things that I learned throughout middle school and high school when I'm with [indecipherable], it's easy for me to understand. The concepts are the same, so it's really easy for me to adjust here.

Daniel lamented that students used Korean in some classes:

I guess it's different for each class. For example, an English class, I guess a lot of the kids really work hard because it's a difficult class. You have to write essays; the professor gives you hard academic writings to understand. So, people basically sense...The ones who are efficient in English, they ask questions, you know, "What this is mean? How did you think about this?" The problem is, most of the conversations are done in Korean even in the classrooms...And the professor does give warnings about this. But I guess it's a difficult thing because you might be able to ask a question in English and try to explain that, I guess in a better way, it's better in Korean for most students. Even though the material was in English. But I guess it's an English class and most of the classes have that kind of situation. But it's not a requirement to use English in class...It's not a rule...the teacher it might be because she doesn't understand Korean. But it's not a rule. For example, I was in international school in Korea, but it was a rule. It was a

> requirement to use English at all times...not here...in one of the class, the professor sometimes gives us questions to each kind of group. There are groups in the class, about nine of them. So, for example, we read the material and he would give us questions about the material and we would talk to them in the group. But he doesn't really mind it at all, but in that case, we would talk in Korean too.

Mike felt that language use should be addressed by the institution:

> In normal times, we speak a lot of Korean in the class because not all people, all peers are fluent in English. We actually speak Korean a lot. That's also a barrier for Korean students because they don't learn so much the language, even though they have such a great opportunity to learn the language during the [this institution]. What I do is, I try my best to speak English, but it's becoming awkward and weird that everyone speak Korean and then I'm the one speaking English. That's the problem that [this institution] has to control for now or encourage people to speak English and actually...That's the biggest challenge, I think, that [this institution] has. Otherwise, group projects and all sort of tests, we're really encouraged to do all the academic stuff, except the Korean speak English.

In the case of Irene, it could also make it difficult for students to identify as students at a North American institution:

> The lectures by the English and I write the English essay everydays and I heard the English everydays and I speak. And so, that will be help me to identify...I always speak in Korean and my Korean friends. It is hard to speak in English and

> I forgot that I'm the American university student...when I'm outside...Monday to Friday is more longer than the weekend. So, I feel more like American students.

Irene directly mentioned what I suspect was a commonly held perspective among the participants namely that being "American" is correlated with English use. The participants had enrolled at the institution knowing they would need to use English and improve their English in a remedial program if they could not meet a specific standard of fluency. Many of them, though, felt they were not quite up to what they perceived as standards, which I thought was just a typical sentiment among Koreans about their English inability I have encountered in everyday interactions. In my experience, even some very fluent English-speaking Koreans will deny they are able to converse in English in a casual exchange, which is mentioned further in Chapter Five.

***Global liminality: Being Korean in American institution.*** Since the TNBC was comprised of an international student and faculty body, primarily American and Korean, participants said that individuals acted out different norm-based behaviors depending on their background. The participants felt that Koreans do not often approach others in a casual manner, as there are particular rules for interaction with strangers and people of differing social ranks. The participants were learning new ways of interacting in a space where social rules were negotiated in both Eastern and Western contexts. William claimed

> People in Korea, they just, when I say I am going the US university, they said...they don't know our university names, even if it famous in the US. They say just like it is US university...just in the US, just located in the US... "I don't know

> exactly name of this university. Is this name, [this U.S. institution] in Korea?" Then, I think they consider this university is just a US university...not just located in Korea, but...they probably just told me, "Korean student," because I've never been abroad and I cannot speak English well, like other students...so this makes me feel just, "I'm Korean."

Jennifer said she felt she is Korean because she was part of a remedial English program:

> Maybe I think it is...I'm freshman. I am still think I am a Korean student because I am on [remedial English] programs in school...It is [name of program], which means that students who are not fluent in English, the school provide a small educational English like language support programs to help our majors. And, in that program there are many Koreans students and that makes me think I'm Korean still.

Ashley said that after a little more time in the TNBC, she would become more of a North American student:

> As I am international school student so my friends think I am good at English. So, first words I didn't know that and I'm proud of myself and I'm just proud of myself I'm doing well in this other country's university. When asked if she feels like a North American student, Ashley replied "Surely, I am freshman and I have only two months study abroad. So, I'm really Korean so I don't know if I know what factors… next semester I think."

Many of the participants claimed they identified as Korean students, but that they might become American students while enrolled at the TNBC over time. Jennifer, and William

in part, equated their identification as a Korean student with their levels of English fluency and lack of experience abroad, and Ashley indicated that she would evolve over time. This conception might represent some cognizance about the role of acculturation, but in a passive sense, meaning they would become American students rather than actively identify themselves as such.

***Global liminality: Learning new cultural norms.*** Sometimes there were instances of confusion that came about from being Korean in a North American institution. Participants described having to learn new interaction styles. Ellen spoke about having to learn to approach people:

> I have a question for professor, so I've been there but it's very quiet. Really awkward when I meet the professor who I've never saw and like, "Hi," and go in, very awkward...I don't know the manner about being polite [in Western society].

Yuca shared an experience about what happened after encountering a non-Korean professor in an elevator:

> Actually, they are a bit different because when I am on the elevator, I met some professor and even though I- didn't know her but she smiled me, and she turned to say "hi," but it would be very...for a Korean, that's not so comfortable situation because we don't say any "hi" to unfamiliar people. So, it's very creates shock. Then I did same thing to another foreign student in dorm and she also a little bit surprised because she said Korean students don't say "hi" to her. So, it's a little bit…so, from the time I was trying to say "hi" to another foreign people, professor

or student but that's not easy because anyway now this school is in Korea and the most of the students are Koreans, so we're not used to that kind of culture.

These examples show what I believe would be everyday types of exchanges that prompted the participants to ponder the appropriate way to communicate in the TNBC. Both of these participants conveyed a sense of apprehension about approaching and interacting with non-Koreans because of perceived cultural differences. As I brought up in Chapter Two, Moon (2016) claimed that non-Koreans face difficulties when trying to communicate with Koreans in higher education institutions. These examples would imply that the situation may not be so different at a TNBC in Korea, which might help to illustrate the nature of cultural hybridity at a TNBC. This is examined further in Chapter Five.

***Haecceity: Having easy access to faculty.*** The Haecceity variation of this category consists of discussions about how the TNBC is unique in the way that students adapt and identify. In the case of the TNBC, the participants were adapting to an environment, lifestyle, learning style, and culture that were dissimilar to campuses in both the U.S. and South Korea. The adaptations in this variation were not often a struggle, instead they led to more of a process of understanding something new and uncommon. Nonetheless, they could be difficult for participants to get used to.

The Having Easy Access to Faculty theme differs from the earlier Utilizing Approachable Faculty theme, in that here participants mentioned that the faculty were available, but not that they had necessarily used the faculty as a resource. Jean said

> I was very surprised with two professors because I got an email from a professor. He said that, "I'm in the campus, maybe we can postpone. If you have any question regarding assignment just because it's in the campus and just have some time with you." He goes like, "He's very kind" and I think, "No, no." It is very kind of show because professor is like parents in Korea. Very respectful person...That they're asking student to come to this campus and have some time with him because of our class work and assignments. It is interesting happening.

As Jean's example shows, she and others were surprised the faculty member was available, but they did not follow through with the faculty member's offer. The key point of this theme was that students felt assured they could contact their professors at any time, unlike what they believed would be the case at another institution. Other participants mentioned that what they perceived as the large size of an American university would also preclude the chances to meet with a professor, which is why this theme is situated in the Haecceity variation.

***Haecceity: Learning through North American curriculum.*** The North American curriculum at the TNBC brought with it a new way of learning for the participants, as they found it to be more interactive and collaborative than what they would find in a Korean university. Further, it presented the challenge of having to memorize and utilize new standards. Jean talked about having to learn new Western formatting styles:

> I think we have more assignment, compared to the other university. Because as a freshman, many Korean University should enjoy their life of freshman, of playing and just hanging out but for me there's so many assignment. Even though I

> studied in foreign countries. I mean not Korea's school, I have never aware about A.P.A. style of writing and Chicago…there are some format of papers, I've never aware about that but a professor just ask me, "Write a paper, A.P.A. style," and I was like, "What is A.P.A. style?" I did not know about citation and all because I did not study that in my high school. It was like I searched on Google and I did that. My professor said, "Why you do not keep some A.P.A, I don't know, Chicago rules?" I told him, "I do not know what is Chicago." Professor helped me out. For American student, I don't know, this kind of format must be very simple because they learned in high school but for me I studied in a Korean school and for some students who studied in Korean high school must felt some difficulties knowing some basic format because it's quite different. It was difficulty at I think.

According to Minnie, "In Korean university, many faculties don't ask me to 'what's your opinion?' but in here faculties are asked us students 'what is your opinion' and 'what do you think?' It's hard to me." William said the biggest difference for him was learning through class debate:

> I've heard about the Korean university life from my friends. I think, there's not too much difference compared with Korean university. They have a test and also we have tests, they have assignments, we have assignments. Just, I think, the only difference, in this Korean and the US university, is just the language...Just the language or a class. Korean university classes don't use debate, like debate...They just...the professor says in front of the class and students are just writing the professors' comments, but in [this institution]...do you know [North American

professor at the TNBC]? He likes the debate in class. So, we debate about the every topics in each classes...For me, and for other students, it's very hard, to us, because, the debate… speaking is very important in debate…but our speech is not good to describe our thoughts so it is hard...I want to practice the debate and I want to say something, in English, I have to think a little time, and then others just already finish their topics. So, I'm always late to participate.

Yuca felt that the structure of the Western classroom was sometimes unclear:

> The least comfortable place is of course, the classroom...First reason is English and the second is, is it true to be true, the lecture way is different from Korea University. So, I'm not used to the kind of lectures, so sometimes I feel the professor doesn't focus on the material. Sometimes. Because, we are used to Professor emphasize or explain every single material, yes, but the Professor in this University, they don't. So, sometimes I feel like that, but we have to take exam, midterm and final exams, but, how can I say? Sometimes, they don't emphasize something in the lecture, but they give us tasks for the material. Yes, that made me a little bit confused...because they don't say for the material, actually. Of course, they let us read or you have to prepare, you have to see the materials, but they don't say every single, what can I say? The definitions or about some explanation, but they are coming to exam so…Yes, in my opinion that's not so fair...Not all the classes. Not all...the first time I think, that is from just Professor himself, but later it turned out other Professor in other major, he also did, so I think maybe there is kind of differences between American University and

> Korean University...maybe even Professor doesn't emphasize or teach us every detail. I have to memorize or study by myself.

All of these quotes show that the students had to adapt to new learning styles that in their conceptions would not be part of a Korean university experience. In particular, the debate format used in classes came up in other themes, such as Using Approachable Faculty and Learning More Flexibly at the TNBC. This style was viewed as a non-Korean classroom style by the participants, which is a conception that agrees with the claims of Kim (2011) and Moon (2016) that interactions between students and faculty are more rigid in Korean institutions.

***Haecceity: Sharing the experience outside.*** The participants said they were often eager to share their experiences at the TNBC with family and friends at home, because many people did not know much about the institution or what exactly a TNBC was. Oftentimes participants would insist that they wanted the outside world to be more aware of their experience and to know what made it unique. Jennifer said her family and friends were both curious and apprehensive about the experience at a TNBC:

> I usually talk with my parents, yes, because they really curious about my university life and my...also talk with my high school friends. Most of them surprised that my university life because it's a little different from them...They say it was disgusting about many English, with many assignments within English. So, they said it is really terrible.

Sarah said the same thing:

> Well, outside campus, friend is they not know this school. They not know the system in here. Also, they're very curious about this campus. I share with them and they talk me about Korean University...They're most curious about professors. Well, they're all from...I said they asked me about they really came from US, like that. I asked by my friend all the lectures are in English and she was very surprised...she said, "Well, I cannot...couldn't do it because every lectures are in English so she was, she says she will be scared.

Peter said he was eager to share his experiences with everyone around him:

> I share my experiences with my like hometown friends at priority and my families, because they do not have watched my experience and they're the most friendly peoples that, they're the most close people for me. So, I usually tell experiences to them first, then if I have unique experiences I try to tell to everybody, because it might be beneficial to them like inspiring the people, students, or professors. And make like more actively communicate with others.

Ellen said that the idea of a TNBC was quite new and unfamiliar to people outside the institution, and that she wanted them to know more:

> Many people do not have a chance to know this university, so I want to introduce many people. In last quarter, the first students who were coming as international university and they don't really know what is this campus. I think they need more information...They don't have a chance. For example, in Korean high school, it was good. Universities are coming to high school and drawing up like, "This is our university and come to our-" But this university, they don't.

Sharing the experience with others outside of the TNBC gave the participants an outlet to express their enthusiasm about their unique experience. At the same time, it gave them perspective on the uniqueness of the TNBC, which was a concept they claimed was unfamiliar to many of their listeners.

***Haecceity: Finding a different standard of success.*** Participants implied that they were gaining a new perspective on education after enrolling at the TNBC. They determined that the TNBC experience was valuable in ways that other institutions were not, both because of the language of communication and a focus on learning from others rather than learning solely from the instructor. Ellen said she had changed her perspective on the importance of a university's reputation:

> I am a high school student who lived in Korea for a long, long time, so I was worried about the University name value. In Korea, everyone ask you, what is your University? Then everyone thinks that "Oh, she can study hard or she are not very good." I don't really like that so I think I could, if I study in [this institution], I can speak English a little bit and I can improve my English skills and actually, Koreans do not know how can I study hard or how can I study or...yes...I think my mind is going to change because, when I was a high school student, I thought that name value is the best thing what you need to think about, but, in this university, I actually don't need to worry about that and I really need to think about that, how other people are thinking, so I think that's good...I think it changed my mind.

Yuca described a difference in teaching styles, which at the TNBC were a departure from the lecture format common in Korean universities:

I feel there being afraid of speaking English because I don't have much experience in abroad. Even though I have traveled to some countries, but they required me just short conversation, not writing or kind of presentation. Maybe if I have experience here, maybe I can upgrade my English. That's the first, and the second is I'm not used to American culture. Actually, now I attend about two months in here, then I attend the class, the lecture way is totally different from Korea...So, I was a little bit surprised. Because Korean used to...The way of learning is teacher just tell us every single knowledge, we have to memorize. But, in American University they just gave us some materials of reading and let us prepare in advance and they thought we already have some background knowledge with the material, and based on that, they give us a lecture. So, if I don't prepare anything then the lecture is useless for me. Actually, now I can took class major course. One is the introduction for a major, so there are a lot of freshmen student here. They, in my opinion, they actually don't attend or say their opinion in the class. But, another class the most of students are not senior, junior or sophomores and they better than freshmen. I think maybe because they had a lot of experience than freshmen, so I think they are used to this kind of atmosphere.

The Adapting and Becoming category represents transitions to an intercultural academic environment that presented newness and challenge. For many of the participants, the challenges presented the opportunity to make changes to their thinking, behaviors, and habits, whereas for others in the Being Unsure of their Decision theme,

the challenges surmounted the willingness or ability to adapt. It is possible to assume that the less students claimed they felt they were "fitting in" (Pyvis and Chapman, 2005, p. 51), the less likely they would be able to adapt, become peer connected, or feel reasonably capacitated. However, this assumption is not a finding, but it does highlight the imprecise hierarchy of the three categories.

**Connections Between and Variations Across the Categories of Description**

As described in Chapter Three, Marton (1981) said that all of the categories of description show up in various situations and that individuals can shift between different categories at different times. I indicate in this study that the relationship between the categories of description in the outcome space is pre-eminent and subordinate. I established the hierarchical framework following Walsh (2000), who said, "Arranging the categories in a hierarchy may occur later as a consequence of some framework which has been imposed on the set of categories, or the hierarchy may depend on some internal relation in the data." (p. 28). The connection between categories that forms the hierarchy in this study can be understood in terms of both Bronfenbrenner's (1979) human ecology theory, and elements of acculturation as described by Holland et al. (1998). It is important to note that forming the connections between categories "does not mean that a linear hierarchical structure...need emerge" (Åkerlind, Bowden & Green, 2005c, p. 95). Thus, I formed the categories of description based on the consistency of themes and their underlying premises, and throughout my analyses, I found connections between categories that echoed the literature of acculturation and ecology.

When creating the outcome space, I found that the categories were slightly metaphorical to both the human ecology framework of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and acculturation of Holland et al. (1998). Acculturation is primarily an internal process that is both affected and effected by the environment, and through dialogue, and it is a response of the individual's internal voice with the voices and symbols in their surroundings (Holland et al., 1998). I believe that in order to respond to environmental stimuli and to the voices of others in a chosen shared context, an individual must be open to and eventually willing to make behavioral adaptations. In this study, the chosen shared context was enrollment at a TNBC, which the participants unanimously expressed was done with the understanding that the contexts would be unfamiliar to them in some or many ways. Thus, the foundational category is Adaptating and Becoming, where the students were in most themes responding internally to their immediate surroundings and trying to locate themselves and their roles in the contexts.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory describes human ecology as taking places at multiple levels, which are first the individual, then small group microsystems, then the organization or community exosystem, and finally the external systems known as the macrosystems. The microsystem consists of peers, family, and the nearest settings of the experience, which is understood and shaped by interaction. Interaction in the students' microsystem at the TNBC was expressed as being primarily with peers, which is why the Peer Connected category is next in the hierarchy.

Because the focus of this study is on the experience at a TNBC, the capacitation provided by the TNBC crosses through both the exosystem and macrosystem. This is

because I believe the TNBC is the setting where the contexts of interaction occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and that its very existence is based on and shaped by policies, planning, and political and economic situations that extend beyond its physical campus confines. The conceptions of this setting are defined first by individual adaption to its contexts, then through peer interaction in the microsystem. Finally, differing conceptions of capacitation might evolve from the understanding of the environment from both internal and external dialogue.

Again, as a disclaimer, I also posit like Marton (1981), that the categories are interchangeable in every situation depending on individual conceptions. Thus, the hierarchies are not necessarily linear. However, they do indicate an inherent and internal acculturative and ecological framework between the categories (Åkerlind, Bowden & Green, 2005c; Walsh, 2000), which are consistent with the theoretical background of the study.

***Variations.*** The variations illustrate different ways of conceiving the same experience of being a first-year student at the TNBC, in the same space, and among many of the same people. Whereas one student might see a small campus as a hindrance, as in the Hoping for Larger and Livelier campus theme, another student might find capacitation through the thematic lens of Being Nearby Necessities. In a class taught with scholarly English, one student's conception may be that they are struggling to adapt, as in the Struggling with English theme, whereas another student might feel capacitated as in the Learning English to be Global theme. Thus, the connections between the different conceptions come from different ways of understanding the same overall experience.

## Conclusion

This chapter clarifies the findings and presents the categories of description in full. The responses of the first-year students in this study imply that they understood themselves as being in a period of transition into what they believed others would identify as American students. The recurring experience is that participants overwhelmingly perceived their own identity as being in a process of sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2005, p. 709) to the TNBC, and a lifestyle that was different from what had lived, and what they had anticipated. Because the interviews were conducted early in the students' university career, they may not have yet perceived themselves as being either integrated into the dominant culture (Berry, 2005) or marginalized. These findings lead to discussions in the next and final chapter on the implications of the findings and recommendations.

# Chapter Five

The purpose of this study was to learn the variations of experiences shared by first-year students on their experiences and development at a TNBC in South Korea. It is a formidable task to reach general conclusions from a collective voice based on interviews with multiple participants, which requires faithful re-readings of interviews and extensive analysis. This final chapter includes a summary of the findings from these efforts. First, I address my research questions and initial assumptions going into the study. Next, I discuss how findings relate to literature on acculturation before also connecting the findings to scholarly literature on human ecology and identity and self-authorship. The section on identity development leads to a discussion of English and Identity Development mentioned in Chapter Four. Following are the implications for practice, recommendations for research, and sections on trustworthiness and the limitations of the study.

## Summary of Findings

The original research questions of this study were established to uncover the experiences of first-year students at a TNBC, located in their homeland of South Korea. Through analyses of interviews, I discovered numerous themes that fit major categories in an outcome space. This section illustrates my responses to the research questions through the findings of the methodology I used in the study.

***Research question 1.*** The first research question asked what conceptions first-year students in the receiving nation form about their identities and how they are formed while they are earning a North American degree at a North American university in their country. In order to answer this question, I had to understand the experiences the participants related to me, with a focus on their descriptions, both within and apart from the context of the dialogue. The major finding in response to this question was that there were three overarching ways that students understand their experience at a TNBC, which are presented in and comprise Chapter Four, and are briefly listed as follows:

*Reasonably capacitated.* The first major conception comes from the Category of Description labeled Reasonably Capacitated. The Reasonably Capacitated category contains themes that represent how the participants saw themselves as being enabled to various extents by attending the TNBC, particularly in terms of restraint by Korean social structures. The themes that populated this category reflect capacitation experienced at varying degrees, from very little to high capacitation depending on individuals' conceptions.

*Peer connected.* The second major conception comes from the Category of Description labeled Peer Connected. This category contains themes that represent how the participants saw themselves and their experiences as social and relational. Interactions were the overall prime focus of the themes, and interactions are a catalyst for identity development (Holland, et al., 1998).

*Adapting and becoming.* The third major conception comes from the Category of Description labeled Adapting and Becoming. This category is populated with themes that

illustrate how students made transitions in their thinking, habits, and behaviors to become better acquainted, adapt to, and meet the expectations of their new institutional context. Pyvis and Chapman (2005) and Baxter Magolda (2001) describe university students as developing identity through learning to belong, so they navigate their surroundings accordingly.

***Research question 2.*** The second research question asked how students from the host country interact with the TNBC cultural context and how that affects their meaning making and identity development. Throughout the interviews, the participants shared multiple ways within each category that they connected with the ecosystem, along with their motivations. Much of the response to this question is explained further in this chapter with regard to the cultures of the institution and its relation to identity development.

***Research question 3.*** The final question asked how the TNBC students perceived their goals in relation to their experiences, and how they came to the conclusions. The participants' responses to this question populated each category with their aspirations and how they were developing early in their experience as university students. Much of the findings for this have also been presented in Chapter Four, but a brief summary of relevant discussions on expectations is included below. The TNBC was a new concept to the participants, but one which was available and suited their wide-ranging individual interests and goals to various extents. The Reasonably Capacitated category illustrates many of the participants' expectations and in which areas they felt capacitated. An example of this is that the participants in most cases mentioned they expected to gain a

wider view, which I have described as likely resembling a global perspective of the world. At the time of data collection participants described that indeed they were developing a wider view.

*Goals and experiences.* The participants' expressed expectations confirmed some of my own initial expectations in our interviews about Korean undergraduate life. The participants also indicated that they had decided to attend the TNBC to experience something different from what they normally might experience in Korea. I mentioned in Chapter One that universities in Korea are hierarchical in comparison to institutions in the U.S. with strict interactions between students and professors (Kim, 2011). Participants mentioned in all categories across the Haecceity variation that the TNBC was generally free of hierarchies that they would find in a Korean university, and also indicated that they had chosen a non-Korean institution to set themselves apart from the hierarchy. However, part of the participants' conception of adaptation under the Global Liminality and Hindrance variations was being confronted by different interaction styles and making attempts to be proficient in these styles.

*Drinking culture.* I raised the concept of the drinking culture at Korean universities as a possibility in Chapter Two, because I understood drinking culture to be a significant aspect of Korean undergraduate life (Choi, Park, & Noh, 2016, Moon, 2016). The majority of the participants indicated that there is a drinking culture at the TNBC, but that it is overwhelmingly low pressure, particularly when compared to what they perceive as the drinking culture at a typical Korean campus. The concept of drinking culture was not defined by myself or the participants in our discussions, but it was clear that some

participants considered it to be a Korean phenomenon, whereas others implied that drinking culture is any situation where people revolve a part of their lives around alcohol. According to the participants, drinking was not required by students of a higher accorded status, but it was most often only a part of the lives of students who wanted to drink. The sŏnbae and hubae relationship (Kim, 2016) itself seemed nearly nonexistent in the form it would exist at a Korean institution. Some participants used these terms to describe upper-class and first year students, but they did not use the terms rigidly. It is likely that the students understood themselves as being at a different, non-Korean institution where they did not have to adhere to the norms of a Korean University. Whereas the expectation at a Korean university might be that students should form hierarchies based on class year, the students at the TNBC are aware that they are not students in a fully Korean context.

*Student life.* According to the participants, student life was comprised of a network of peers in a small community of primarily ethnic homogeneity. Their experience involved a transition to life as a university student. More importantly, because they were students at a TNBC, they had to transition to a context where there were less familiar expectations. This means that they had to adapt to a space that was different from both a North American university in North America and different from a Korean institution. The students were thus going through psychological acculturation, which is "changes in an individual who is a participant in a culture contact situation, being influenced both directly by the external culture, and by the changing culture of which the individual is a member" (Barry, 2005, p. 701). The culture contact situation was enrollment at the TNBC, and all of the participants were Koreans experiencing education

in a North American institution. Each of them would likely experience different emotions and react differently, which accounts for the variations of phenomenographic inquiry. The purpose for the methodology in this study was to explore the students' conceptions without delving too deeply into the students' reasons for their conceptions. With this understanding, it is also important to note that according to Barry,

> not every individual enters into, and participates in, or changes in the same way; there are vast individual differences in psychological acculturation, even among individuals who live in the same acculturative arena. That is, while general acculturation is taking place at the group level, individuals have variable degrees of participation in them, and variable goals to achieve from the contact situation." (2005, p. 702)

Thus, the participants were relating the same overall experience in ways that were unique to their own individual acculturative development at the TNBC.

**An Intercultural Institution**

A TNBC is designed to be an approximation of a university campus in the home country, with the same systems and academic quality available for learners. This means that to an extent, it may or may not match or reflect or adhere to the quality standards, policies, missions, and life of the home campus and the cultures of the home campus. It is less arguable that a campus from one country brings with it a microcosm of the home nation to the host nation in the form of a TNBC. At the time this study was conducted, this TNBCs did not bring over such common co-curricular experiences as Greek Life, basketball and football games with tailgate parties, marching bands, or many other

nostalgic features commonly associated with student experiences at a large, public North American university. Still, the participants in this study mentioned that there were many intercultural aspects of the TNBC that they experienced or had to adapt to. They said they had anticipated some difference prior to enrollment and discovered others over a short time. They described a new culture that is not exactly foreign and not exactly their own, which they often described through a dualistic lens of how a North American institution contrasts with a Korean institution.

***Sophisticated stereotypes.*** Sophisticated stereotypes regularly appeared in the interviews and many participants expressed assumptions with cultural universals, such as that all Korean institutions are rigid or that all Americans at rural institutions eat sandwiches. A sophisticated stereotype is less harmful than a generic stereotype "because it is based on theoretical concepts and lacks the negative attributions often associated with its lower-level counterpart. Nevertheless, it is still limiting in the way it constrains individuals' conceptions of behavior in another culture." (2000, p. 66). One significant feature of the interviews was that the participants at times exhibited that they had to behave a certain way in order to be American students. Berry (2005) described "changes in a person's behavioral repertoire" and making accommodations as the process of acculturation. The nature of their adjustments were to classes that were structured around debate and rapport, rather than a transmission-based lecture style, which was what they often claimed is the traditional Korean classroom style. However, as in the case with Yuca greeting a professor, sometimes the expectations of the participants and other individuals around them, about cultural protocols, were contradicted. According to

Osland, Bird, Delano, and Jacob (2000), these paradoxes are contradictions to sophisticated stereotypes.

***Polyculturalism.*** It may be increasingly sensible to consider the experiences of a TNBC through the contemporary psychological lens of polyculturalism, which views cultures as being historically interchangeable. This perspective is not commonly considered, because Morris, Chiu, and Liu (2015) argued

> country comparisons treat culture as a categorical, independent variable. "Categorical" suggests that cultures are bounded groups defined by shared distinctive traits; "independent" suggests that societies develop their own norms sui generis rather than through contact and interchange. These assumptions, which can be called culturalism, are close to commonsense understandings of culture or ethnicity. (p. 633)

A solution for moving away from a culturalist assumption is to take a pluralist perspective on how cultures are shared and networked throughout time, to better understand how individuals are influenced in part by multiple cultures (2015). Polyculturalism is a holistic approach, in that it "de-emphasizes boundaries between different groups of people and instead emphasizes connections across different groups, while still recognizing the importance of people's racial and ethnic identities" (Bernardo, Rosenthal & Levy, 2013, p. 336). The experiences of TNBC students can be viewed then, with the understanding that they are never a monolithic culture. Thus, even if the students are among what might be considered a homogenous group, in this case Koreans, they are in fact influenced by multiple cultures rather than a singular Korean culture. This fact is

most evident with the Experiencing Diversity in Homogeneity theme under the Peer Connected category, where the participants mentioned that their Korean peers came from a variety of backgrounds and global experiences.

Korea in 2017 was, like many developed Asian countries, brimming with the consumer culture of Western and other global fashion brands and trends, global restaurant chains, Western films and their associated toys and character dolls, U.S. television series, and visitors and expatriates from around the globe. These consumer materials physically ran directly up to the front of the TNBC in this study, in the form of enormous outlet malls and cinemas that had recently sprung up directly across the road from the campus. The participants were inevitably in consistent contact with multiple cultures on and near the campus, whether the cultures were predominantly only Korean and North American, or the cultures of international students, international professors, international texts, and global social media. It is plausible to assume that there are multiple influences on the lifestyles of Koreans from the outside world. However, Korea also spreads its own wide-reaching blanket of influence around the globe through music and media (Chang, 2015; Kwon and Kim, 2012; Meza and Park, 2015). Polyculturalism, thus, represents and acknowledges multiple forms of complex and sometimes reciprocal cultural exchange (Morris, Chiu, and Liu, 2015), and a TNBC may be a good example of a polycultural institution.

According to the participants, particularly within the Reasonably Capacitated category, the TNBC promised and provided something culturally different from what they believed they would experience at a Korean university, had they chosen to attend a

more local homogeneous institution. Furthermore, in conveying the point that students at the TNBC might be especially interested in pursuing cultural experiences, many of the participants were experienced internationally to varying degrees over short to extensive amounts of time. Their identities were already likely to have been negotiated through intercultural experience and contact to some degree, meaning that at the time of the interviews, participants were already experiencing an array of identities. Thus, the term Korean as an identity marker takes on some ambiguity in terms of its actual meaning, because Korean is both an ethnicity and a culture. Many participants mentioned that they either had a global identity, or that they were what they expected others would refer to as a typical Korean identity, which itself is an ambiguity because of multiple possible interpretations. Through polyculturalism, the ambiguity of cultural identities can be better understood, because "rather than needing one strong cultural identity, individuals can thrive with several strong identifications or several weak identifications" (Morris, Chiu, & Liu, 2015, p. 637).

**Identity Development and the Influence of Ecology**

Identity development is a process of negotiation through interaction and everyday experience. A focus of this study has been identity development at a TNBC. People come to know themselves by experiencing different worlds and interacting with others. The outcomes of the findings as they relate to identity development can best be understood through the concepts of figured worlds (Holland, et al., 1998), and self-authorship (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Both concepts provide a lens that illustrates how the

setting is constructed and how students navigate their place in the setting. First, however, it is necessary to understand the ecological context of the institution.

***Ecology and interaction between the participants and their environment.*** In Chapter One, I presented terms for a human ecology model of TNBCs, and consequently these terms apply to the TNBC in this study. The participants described a varied organism (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) comprised of Western and Korean faculty and administration and a mostly homogenous Korean student population that included a few international students. There was a constant process of acculturation (Berry, 2005) taking place, mainly because the students were ethnic Koreans adapting to a North American institution.

The participants described acculturation to the context of the TNBC in their conversations, as evidenced by the Adapting and Becoming category of description. The participants were adapting to a structure that dominated a significant amount of their everyday life and making accommodations and seeking resources to succeed. The students often interacted within the space of the TNBC, as it was in a fairly remote location and because they spent a lot of time studying or participating in activities on the campus. Hence, students' conceptions of their experiences at a TNBC should be understood through the environments within which the students learned and interacted.

The microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993), also referred to as the space (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993), of the TNBC consisted of immediate settings. These included the classroom, the library, and other areas on campus where their direct interactions took place. However, it is also possible to include bars and shopping areas near the campus,

because they were nearby enough that most or all of the participants mentioned that they went and interacted there throughout their everyday life. Participants mentioned part time jobs and internships, trips out of town to see family, and time spent with friends from middle and high school. These interactions can be classified as the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993), which are the settings that linked to the participants' experiences. The exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1993) of the branch campus was the conception of the world outside of the campus, including the academic world, realities of the job market in Korean and abroad, and pressures that students faced when considering their identity in relation to other contexts. These situations seemed to have a strong influence on the participants, because as seen with the Haecceity variation across all the conceptions, the participants often situated their experience at a TNBC in relation to other postsecondary institutions.

Interaction has been an important locus of exploration in this study, as it is a foundation for human ecology, acculturation, and engagement. One of the purposes of the interview questions was to elicit from participants the nature of their interactions and to better understand their interdependence (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Different types of interactions fit each finding, category, and variation. There were interactions between Korean students of different experiential and global backgrounds, interactions between Koreans and non-Koreans, interactions between Korean students and foreign professors and administrators, and interactions between Korean students and Korean professors and administrators. These interactions formed a collective, socially constructed understanding of the TNBC known as a figured world (Holland, et al., 1998).

***Figured worlds.*** A figured world in the context of identity development is "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 52). These figured worlds are conceptual spaces where people form new senses of self or identities. According to Holland, et al. (1998), "figured worlds rest upon people's abilities to form and be formed in collectively realized 'as if' realms…people's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these 'as if' worlds" (1998, p. 49). The first-year Korean students at the TNBC were living and adapting in a figured world, which is the space for the development of socially constructed self and identity. The students sought their sense of place in a realm where they would need to understand their own Korean ethnic identity as North American degree earning students at a non-Korean institution in South Korea.

The TNBC was a figured world, complete with symbols that were valued in context. Symbols such as the institutional brand and its acronyms, its mascot, colors, classes, homework, textbooks, a residence hall, and facilities represented to participants that they were in an institution of higher education. The characteristics of each symbol at this particular institution, as well as their contextual location on reclaimed land in South Korea, indicated to the students that they were at a unique institution of higher learning, unlike what they assumed they would ordinarily find at an American or Korean institution. In this study, though examples of how the participants viewed their situation as unique crossed all the categories and variations, the Haecceity variation best represents a culmination of quotes and identified themes that reveal the uniqueness of the TNBC.

For example, the theme of experiencing less hierarchical relationships was a description of peer interaction by the participants, which they implied did not look fully Korean, nor fully American. The conception was that Korean undergraduate peer interaction is far more rigid than American undergraduate peer interaction. As described by the participants, the peer interaction at the TNBC was not American, because the students used the Korean terms sŏnbae and hoobae to mark the different ages and school years of peers. On the other hand, the terms did not bestow rank or authority on the older sŏnbae to govern the decisions of underclass peers as the participants said is common in Korean universities. Thus, in this figured world, peer interaction could be understood as a unique combination of North American and Korean.

As well, in the figured world of the TNBC, the students formed collective assumptions that dictated their adaptations. For example, the participants implied that there were the real expectations that successful students speak English well, that the institution's infrastructure needed improvement, and that cultural norms provoked different interactions with non-Koreans. In order to thrive as a student in such an environment, the participants indicated they would have to make personal adjustments to adapt before they could realize actualization. Some of these adjustments necessitated that students become more active and involved, whereas others felt they should spend much of their time studying, and a majority expressed that they would need to improve their English ability. According to Holland, et al. (1998),

> Figured worlds take shape within and grant shape to the coproduction of activities, discourses, performances and artifacts. A figured world is peopled by

> the figures, characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within, distinguishable perspectives on, and orientations toward it. (p. 51)

Thus, in the socially constructed figured world of the TNBC, a conceptual space was opened for identity development. It was a unique form of identity development, involving both acculturation (Berry, 2005) and interdependence (Hofer, 2010; Markus & Katayama, 1991; Nisbett, 2003), where students would adapt to a culture that was not their own within the conceptual space, while continuing to be centered within the nation of their own ethnic and cultural identity.

Furthermore, because the institution was still in its early stages, along with the concept of being a TNBC student, the culture of the institution was likely not yet concrete, meaning that there would be a lot of ambiguity about how to develop an identity and author one's self in this particular space. The participants did not explicitly identify as Korean students, and often set themselves and the TNBC apart from Korean universities. However, they also did not identify as American students, because they were living in Korea and speaking Korean with their family and friends on a regular basis. According to William in the Being Korean in American Institution theme, they would be viewed as ethnic Koreans by the Korean public. Authorship at the TNBC, I believe, would likely be more fluid and negotiable, at least in the early stages and early years of the TNBCs development.

***Self-authorship.*** Budding elements of the self-authorship process have been implicit throughout this study, as it is an underpinning theory about the development of university students. Self-authorship is a complicated internal process,

> a matter of orchestration: of arranging the identifiable social discourses/practices that are one's resources (which Bakhtin glossed as 'voices') in order to craft a response in a time and space defined others' standpoints in activity, that is, in a social field conceived as the ground of responsiveness (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 272).

This lens of Bakhtinian heteroglossia was used by Holland et al. to describe how "the author works within, or at least against, a set of constraints that are also a set of possibilities for utterance" (1998, p. 171). Critical to the concept of Bakhtin's dialogism is that "in the figured world of dialogism the vantage point rests within the "I" and authoring comes from the I, but the words come from collective experience. Words come already articulated by others." (p. 171). This means that collective experience develops an evolving concept of self. Skinner, Valsiner and Holland (2001) added that

> each identity develops dialogically through continued participation with those actors populating these worlds. Thus, these actors' voices become part of one's consciousness, subjectivity, and inner speech, material which the self can orchestrate and externalize in various ways to position oneself within a figured world. (p. 6).

In a higher education institution, most often students consistently learn and socialize among groups, peers, and cohorts inside and outside of the classroom. It was clear

through the interviews that students at the Korean TNBC were among a small community in a semi-isolated location and mostly lived in the residence halls of a single building on campus. They interacted with many of the same people on a regular basis, which developed both a sense of place, and a sense of self. The place, however, was unfamiliar, and included constraints such as English use, a small size, an isolated location, and new learning styles. There was a "cacophony of different languages and perspectives" (1998, p. 182). These unfamiliar surroundings would have forced an evolving sense of self to author in relation to others.

According to Baxter Magolda and King (2004), self-authorship is the "capacity to internally define a coherent belief system and identity that coordinates mutual relations with others" (p. 8). Baxter Magolda (2001) described four stages to self-authorship which go from following external formulas to reaching a crossroads, and then becoming an author of one's own life and developing internal foundations. This means that individuals move from following authorities and others to slowly finding their own paths, before developing their own internal belief systems. In Baxter Magolda's own studies, findings showed that

> self-authorship took the form of acknowledging the uncertainty of knowledge and crafting their own internal belief systems. Simultaneously, it involved intense self-reflection to explore and select their internal values and identity. They negotiated or renegotiated relationships that balanced their internal beliefs and identity with those of others in a mutual fashion. (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004, p. 10)

The question in light of the findings in this study then, would relate to the external versus internal system that students draw on to develop their relationships with others and carve out their own space in the ecosystem of the TNBC. The findings in Chapter Four indicate that the first-year students at the TNBC were either responding to external formulas, and perhaps only beginning to discover their own internal systems within their new environment.

Baxter Magolda's (2001) research showed that often participants in new contexts "did not have experience in developing their internal voices. Thus, they continued to follow formulas for knowing the world and themselves that they borrowed from the external world around them" (p. xviii). Rather than relying on an internal, authored foundation, many of Baxter Magolda's (2001) participants described dissatisfaction in their pursuits that came from reliance on external formulas. In my findings, particularly with themes such as Learning through North American Curriculum, and Struggling with English, it is clear that the participants were in a process of fostering an understanding of the uncertainties associated with being enrolled at the TNBC.

The common sentiment among the participants that they had to regulate their behaviors and transform themselves to become successful U.S. students may have been a reliance on external formulas about what makes a student successful in a U.S. institution. Where their expectations from external formulas were inadequate, they may have begun to develop internal formulas. Some examples of this development were students at the TNBC trying to understand the Western curriculum and discussion-based teaching methods in the classroom, figuring out how to interact in an unfamiliar Western cultural

environment, and developing studentship through learning time management and self-motivation. One further challenge was developing English language skills in an English-immersion environment while surrounded by Korean speaking peers.

***English and identity development.*** A common theme that became increasingly evident throughout the interviews was the participants' relationship with the English language. Responses ranged from participants discussing English as a hurdle to overcome, to participants indicating they chose the institution because English is easier for them than other languages. It was clear that participants perceived a part of their relationship with the TNBC as a relationship with the English language. I had assumed many students would, like most non-native language users, face challenges in understanding content in a second language; however, I did not assume that the topic of English would take precedence in the interviews. My understanding was that because students planning to attend the institution would be at a sufficient level of proficiency for comprehension and regular English conversation, English would be an afterthought. Questions about English were left out of the interview prompts and questions I asked about English were only follow up to responses where participants brought up the topic. Though it might be obvious that English language would play a role in the lives of students at an English-medium transnational institution, the implications are significant in relation to student interaction and development.

South Korea has been through an extensive trend of "English Fever" (Shim & Park, 2008), where families have spent large sums of money for their children's English education. This phenomenon has also caused a commodification of English in South

Korea (2008), not unlike the idea that higher education is becoming a global commodity (Wilkins, 2015). From a critical perspective, the unanimous reception of a world language has the potential to reinforce "conditions of inequality and dominance" (2015, p. 140). The idea, simply stated is English will be valued such that those who succeed at English will thrive more than others without the financial means or access to learn it at a sufficient level (2015). A symptom of this situation is an ideology of "self-deprecation" (Park, 2009), which assumes Koreans are not proficient English communicators. This means that Koreans, "who, despite strenuous efforts to learn the language, do not possess sufficient competence in English to use it in a meaningful way." (Park, 2009, p. 80). My own analyses found that English is viewed as a challenge and it was common for participants to tell me they did not speak English well. These sentiments fit within the Global Liminality variation of the Adapting and Becoming Category, but the examples were far more numerous than could be exemplified in this dissertation.

Identity development for many Korean students in the TNBC included coming to terms with their own English ability and forming opinions of themselves based on English ability. For more fluent speakers or those who had spent significant time abroad in English-speaking countries, it meant adapting to an environment where their peers may have seemed less qualified based on lower fluency. The TNBC is an environment that rewards the ability to speak English in a country where English is not a first or official language. A potential problem which can affect Korean English speakers in general is the self-deprecation conception, which, according to Park (2009)

> is a shameful admittance that they lack legitimate competence in the language and therefore are subordinate to native speakers who have more power due to their linguistic capital. In this sense, when Koreans say that they don't speak English well, this is an inherently different claim from their saying that they don't speak, say, Arabic or French well; the latter is a more neutral claim which merely states that they don't speak those languages because they are not Arabic or French. (p. 80)

This conception appeared most prominently in this study under the Struggling with English theme, where Erin mentioned that she and her peers were not good at English, so they should just give up using it. Jenny also hinted at a similar claim in the Finding curriculum more relevant than at a Korean university, saying that North American education at the TNBC would be more effective than at a Korean university, in part due to the English language of instruction. One big picture of this is that it reinforces my own initial assumption that TNBCs could possibly run a risk of prizing Western, or North American culture and learning over local culture. However, for the participants who claimed they did prize the North American curriculum, the conception in many cases motivated them to improve, which could be seen in the Overcoming Language obstacles theme under the Adapting and Becoming category. Another big picture understanding is that the necessity to become a fluent English speaker may have been an external formula (Baxter Magolda, 2001) which Eun Ji described as a difficult experience that she was happy to overcome in the Overcoming Language Obstacles theme. Perhaps over time, students might come to a crossroads (Baxter Magolda, 2001) where they would be able to

overcome the external formula and develop an internal identity, or understanding of themselves that would be more fulfilling, and also adequate for success in their individual academic pursuits.

**Implications for Practice**

The participants almost unanimously mentioned that their original expectation was to develop a wider view, which can be seen in the Initiative variation of the Reasonably Capacitated category. I determined through their collective voice that the wider view expresses a more global understanding of the world, and the development of new, perhaps Western-style critical lenses. The participants also expected that they would be in an institution free from the restrictive curriculum, pedagogy, and hierarchies they perceived were features of a Korean institution. Finally, the participants expected they would experience an institution that provided a North American experience in their own land, near family, friends, and the language and culture of their ethnic background. From the findings, it is clear that in spite of hindrances, the students' expectations were met.

According to Baxter Magolda and King (2004), 21st-century education should be holistic and connect "cognitive complexity, identity development, mature relationships, and applying maturity in all these dimensions in everyday life." (p. 4). The TNBC in this study, as described by the participants, met these needs through various practices, such as implementing North American classroom methodologies, implementing an English language policy, and offering opportunities for involvement in student organizations and events. Though the Hindrance variation demonstrates that some attempts were lackluster to the participants, that the infrastructure of the institution was insufficient, and its

potential not yet realized, the students were generally positive about their experience, the skill sets they hoped would develop, and the potential of the transnational institution.

At a North American TNBC, the challenge of fostering a North American experience will be fulfilling the same mission of the home campus for a primarily non-North American population in the population's own home country and cultural context. Thus, for example, administrators and faculty at TNBCs should consider their language policies from the outset, and the consequences for students. Because the degree is intended to be consistent with the degree that would be earned from the institution's home campus, it is logical that the curriculum and the language of the curriculum should be aligned to meet competency standards set by the home institution. However, TNBCs must determine whether students should be allowed to speak their native language at official functions, just as they can in the U.S., or whether the language policies at the TNBC should be extended to the co-curricular. The findings in Chapter Four demonstrate that students struggled to develop their English skills because they primarily spoke Korean everyday outside of class. The dilemma that exists is whether implementing a stricter language policy will negatively impact students' interactions and connection to their cultural surroundings or whether such a policy will increase the benefit of developing English language proficiency. Based on the findings, I am inclined to side with the latter, because the participants exhibited that they both wanted and needed to adapt to meet the standards of the institution.

However, the concept of polyculturalism should be explored further in how it relates to students in global education contexts. In a more practical sense, educators and

administrators involved with TNBCs should be aware of the complexity of both the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students, and the cultural contexts of the institution. Implementing sweeping policies could have positive or negative outcomes depending on their compatibility or clash with local beliefs and traditions, but they could also be influential in fostering stronger interaction between cultures over time. My own findings indicate that most of the students at a TNBC are seeking employment with international organizations or hope to work abroad. In order to achieve in a global organization, they will need to develop competencies to interact with other cultures and to adapt to different beliefs and values, but at the very least, they should be aware of differences and learn from them.

Participants indicated that both the physical and administrative infrastructure, meaning the facilities, enrollments, and student services were lacking. Though this was not a concern that I had considered before this study, it is clear from the findings that institutions that plan to open a TNBC must first and foremost consider the infrastructure of the new institution and how it will meet the needs of potential enrollees. I believe through my experience that some or many TNBCs are built piecemeal, with very limited resources much like a startup enterprise, and address issues as they arise over time. I am doubtful that this strategy is beneficial to students, and the reputation of the TNBC and global institution development. If institutions follow this trend, I find it likely that many TNBCs will face the same outcome of U.S. institutions that expanded through Japan during the 1980s (Altbach, 2004a; Lane, 2011b). I initially expressed concern at the outset of the study about the potential for intellectual imperialism through the direct

transfer of curriculum to an institution abroad (Pyvis, 2011). However, I find this issue to be less threatening than ensuring students have a space where they are wholly capacitated to earn a North American degree as they would in North America.

**Recommendations for Research**

I found through this study that TNBCs provide a myriad of opportunities for research that have not yet been explored. Because they are still in the preliminary stages of a potentially extensive and enduring phenomenon, TNBCs are not consistent, nor similar in their application and operation. Just as increasing standardization of practices and uniform accreditations of postsecondary institutions have only recently come about in the U.S. after a centuries-long proliferation of higher education, so too might TNBCs develop exponentially across the globe before taking on reliably identifiable and lasting characteristics. Because the TNBC phenomenon occurs around the globe, national and culturally-specific nuances will need to be embedded in every study, and neither nation nor culture can be overlooked in studies on TNBCs. This means that TNBCs may be a boon for researchers in coming years, corresponding with the expansive proliferation and entrepreneurship of global campuses within different cultural regions.

Further studies might explore the culture that emerges from the development and sustainment of a TNBC and how both polycultural identities are formed or reified through enrollment at a TNBC. A longitudinal ethnographic and development study might highlight much more of the evolution of identity that occurs at a TNBC. A follow up to this study could be a longitudinal study of these participants and their identity development. This dissertation study provides insight into the collective experience of

participants about a phenomenon as they describe it. It does not, nor is it designed to provide comprehensive insight into the everyday lives of students, nor explore development over time. Such a study would take Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Renn, 2003) into greater account. Further, if I were to replicate this study, or conduct a similar study, I would direct specific questions to elicit responses about how participants adapt and modify their behavior to fit or conform to the institution. Through motivations to do so, participants created a figured world (Holland, et al., 1998) where they could perform as students, pursue relationships with peers, navigate the social environment, negotiate their preferred languages of communication in context, and ultimately determine their priorities as students at a TNBC. Therefore, while the results of their motivations are clear, the reasons for their motivations would require a modified interview protocol, or a study designed from an epistemology that delves deep into the backgrounds of participants and their belief systems.

Researchers from a quantitative epistemology must consider, at the very least, culture and the vast differences in cultural systems, backgrounds, histories, and beliefs, before embarking on large cross-border multi-institutional studies on TNBCs. Even in South Korea, various TNBCs might greatly differ in structure and operation, hindering the accuracy of findings on multiple institutions. Thus, I believe large-scale quantitative studies will be impractical before a greater number of TNBCs proliferate, as well as the numbers of students who attend them.

Two questions that might later be answered through quantitative or mixed-methods studies relate again to culture. The first question is about whether students at a

TNBC are in an institution and ecology where they are more apt to develop pluralist or polycultural identities than within a more traditional or local institution. One or more such studies would require a comparative approach that explores potential outcomes of different types and cultures of institutions, taking into account the demographic makeup of student populations. Another question relates to the extent to which the development of students at a TNBC might be different than international students enrolled at an institution in another country. These questions would require a deep understanding of culture and thorough reviews of literature across specializations on both culture and identity.

**Trustworthiness**

Measures of trustworthiness such as member checking and peer review were implemented to ensure the research is comprehensive. Member checks are utilized in qualitative inquiry to involve participants in data interpretations (Merriam, 2002; Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2016). I conducted member checks by meeting again with the participants at their convenience and clarifying the meanings of their responses as I interpreted them. Though participants were allowed as much time as they needed to negotiate revisions, very few changes were made, including only omissions of personal identifiers and grammatical errors. Peer review was used to confirm clarity of findings. Peer review involves finding an outside reviewer with particular expertise "to review the study's methodology, to analyze portions of data, and to critique findings" (Chenail, 2008, p. 606).

Åkerlind (2012) pointed out that critiques of phenomenography are based on misunderstandings of the methods tend to ignore the fact that the practice of phenomenography is open to variations. Credibility comes in the form of trustworthiness and dependability, which is only required if credibility has not already been established (Collier-Reed, et al., 2009). The inclusion of researcher journaling was intended to strengthen trustworthiness by reflecting on rationales for decision-making throughout the study.

**Limitations**

A limitation illustrated by the Bronfenbrenner (1995) ecology model and my research design is that although my findings may illustrate individual identities at a given point in time, they do not capture the evolution of identities across time (Renn, 2003). Bronfenbrenner (1995) included the aspect of time and life changes with the chronosystem, positing that historical and societal changes can affect a person's social and psychological development. However, I agree with Renn (2003) that "his model is much better suited to exploring the environments, processes, and outcomes of development than for tracking that development across time" (p. 398). Also, Renn (2003) pointed out that interviews do not paint a picture of development over time but capture a current moment and prior development up to the point of the interview. This again ties in with my purpose of using phenomenography to understand how development is occurring at a given moment during the participants' first year of enrollment.

The interviews were conducted with students in English. The determination for this was based on feasibility, but also because the campus required a fluent level of

English proficiency for students to be able to enroll. It is possible that specific details can be lost in translation when interviews are not conducted in a participant's native language. However, participants were allowed to respond in their own language and could be provided an interpreter if necessary. A limitation of using an interpreter would be that the interpretation might not completely convey the participants' conceptions. Therefore, interpretation was only to be used if the participant requested an interpreter to more accurately understand and respond to interview prompts. None of the participants requested an interpreter and only on occasion requested clarifications of difficult words or expressions. My own impression was that students were challenged more in considering their experiences on a meta-critical level than expressing their experiences in English.

Though the study was an attempt to use pure phenomenographic methods, there were limitations in the structures of the interview questions. Phenomenography requires the researcher to ask questions that seek collective accounts from multiple participants. Marton (1986) said

> phenomenography investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience or think about various phenomena. This implies that phenomenography is not concerned solely with the phenomena that are experienced and thought about, or with the human beings who are experiencing or thinking about the phenomena. Nor is phenomenography concerned with conception and thought as abstract phenomena, wholly separate from the subject

> matter of thought and conception. Phenomenology is concerned with the relations that exist between human beings and the world around them. (p. 31)

I was attempting to understand phenomenography for the first time while preparing this study, and it was a learning experience throughout the process of investigation. During the analyses, I moved away from the abstract and focused on participants' direct experience with the phenomenon, namely their conceptions with their identity development at the TNBC. Identity development is an evolving concept, so understanding it as the phenomenon described by participants requires questions that engage participants and encourage them to speak thoroughly about their personal transformations. Thus, if carrying out a similar study, I would probe more into the students' adaptations and understandings of themselves and their sense of place in the TNBC.

**Conclusion**

Branch campuses abroad are labeled with different descriptors, such as international, transnational, and global. I refer to the campuses as transnational, but it is important to understand that labels have the potential of placing an entity into a particular category. The name transnational associates the branch campus with specific traits that are different from what an international branch campus might comprise. I have defined transnational in Chapter One as an aspect of campus internationalization and globalization where branches of higher education institutions or programs are opened and enroll students outside an institution's home country, and where provisions of programs and services cross over national borders. The use of this definition assumes that the

campus abroad will be an extension that provides a very similar experience as the main campus does in the home country.

Because they are still a recent phenomenon, the research on TNBCs is limited. At present, there are no extensively defined standards to determine whether a TNBC is successful, except perhaps for its capacity to replicate the experience at the home campus and that students continue to enroll in them. However, I have mentioned in Chapters Two and Five that some researchers (Pyvis, 2011; Robson, 2011) contended that replication might be an imperialistic imposition on local cultures, and that a transformative perspective may create a more reciprocal exchange between home and host nations. From that perspective, the success of a TNBC might be determined by its ability to be sensitively adapted to the local culture and to promote sharing of traditions and knowledge.

The findings of this study demonstrate that students at a TNBC are seeking an alternative to traditional educational opportunities such as studying at a local institution or pursuing studies abroad. Three categories of description in the outcome space of this study show that students at a TNBC form many conceptions about their shared experiences. The Adapting and Becoming category highlights the students' conceptions that they have to adapt to unfamiliar ideas and practices. The Peer Connected category shows that the students understand their development in a TNBC as being tied with peer interaction. Finally, the students see varying levels of capacitation in the Reasonably Capacitated category, and liberation from what they believe are obstructive norms in

Korean society and the Korean education system. Thus, the experience at a TNBC is certainly described as a unique alternative to other options.

Regardless of whether or not TNBCs as they are currently developed are a product of neoliberalism or academic capitalism, this study exemplifies there is a demand for global institutions close to home, meaning close to family, peers, and the culture of one's ethnic origin. In this sense, TNBCs may actually be or have the potential to be transformative institutions should they be implemented with the needs of enrollees, and not solely financial gain as a primary focus. With a solid infrastructure and adequate resources, TNBCs can bridge knowledge and cultures, and allow students to remain near their homes.

## Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. How would you describe yourself?

2. What made you decide to attend this university? Please share some concrete examples of what attracted you to an American school in your country.

3. When you graduate from this school, you will get a North American university degree. What does this mean to you and why?

4. How do you feel about being identified as a North American student in your own country? Why?

5. How do you feel your experience compares to your peers who attend Korean universities? Why do you feel that way?

6. What aspect of your identity is important to you as a student at this university?

7. What is difficult for you here and what is easy?

8. Where do you feel the most comfortable on this campus, and where do you feel the least comfortable, and for what reasons?

9. Who will listen to you if you have a problem or question, or if you need help or information? Share an example.

10. Who do you normally talk about your experiences with and why?

11. Under what circumstances do you interact with non-Koreans at your university? How are these interactions the same as or different with Koreans? Please share some examples.

12. How do you interact with peers in the classroom? What might that be about?

13. What types of activities do you do outside of class? What do you get out of these activities?

14. Is there anything else you would like to say related to your experiences as a student at this campus?

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## Biography

Shaun Michael Marsh graduated from Cary High School, Cary, North Carolina, in 1996. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2002. He has been employed in various academic roles in both South Korea and the United States for sixteen years and received his Master of Education from North Carolina State University in 2009.