

**INTERCOUNTRY TRANSRACIAL SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTEES -
TODAY'S TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS: HOW HAVE
THEY FARED? THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE**

By

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Grandma Bertha Holt. Because of her hard work and belief in God, she and her husband Harry, pioneered international adoption after the Korean War. In 1956 they started Holt International Children's Center. It is now, the largest international adoption agency in the world. I was fortunate enough to meet her, and to later receive two letters from her. I will always treasure those memories. Due to Grandma Holt, I received the greatest gift of my lifetime, Angela Anne Min Sun Brumble.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the parents' perception of their teenage and young adult intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Although each part of the category has been studied in the literature, very little can be found relating to the children who make up all three parts, especially those who today are teenagers and young adults. This study was done because children from this very special category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees continue to be adopted, yet there is little information to see how they have fared. This study was a convenience sample of fourteen sets of single and married parents who had adopted 21 children and remained in Tucson, Arizona. All families had adopted through Catholic Social Services between the years of 1980 to 1990. Parents rated their 21 adoptees on a questionnaire of 52 questions designed to answer five research questions.

To assure confidentiality, Catholic Social Services mailed the questionnaire, to 23 families who had remained in the Tucson area. Fourteen families with 21 adoptees returned the surveys; an approximate sixty-one percent response. A few demographics stood out. Almost all parents were Caucasian, married 5 to 10 years, and had prior biological or

adopted children in their homes when their adoptee was placed. The majority of parents were older than the average parents of biological children, and most were considered in the High Middle to High financial category at the time of placement. Most considered religion an important value. The only area parents rated as causing a serious problem at times for their child, was the child's Special Needs. Yet the majority of parents, by the Time of Survey, rated their adoptees as successful in employment, having strong identities, and being comfortable in American Society. None of the 21 adoptees had ever had an Adoption Disruption nor an Adoption Dissolution.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will introduce the context of the problem, the statement of the problem, and the need and significance of the study. Limitations of the study and definitions of terms will also be included.

Context of the Problem

Adoption is a legal procedure that provides a permanent home and family for a child whose biological parents are unable, unwilling, or legally prohibited from keeping the child. In general, “adoption is an issue of vital importance for all persons involved in the adoption triangle: the child, the adoptive parents, and the birthparents” (Stolley, 1993, p.26). According to the United States Census (2000) 1.6 million adopted children under the age of eighteen are living in United States’ homes. In addition to this large number of adoptees and their families, Groze (1996) states that many other people are affected by each adoptive placement. These people include relatives, medical personnel, school employees, church groups, social agencies, and family friends. Adoption has a definite effect on those

involved in the adoption placement and on society as a whole. Thus the practice needs to be examined more closely. Stolley (1993) indicates that the results from research on adoption need to be available to the many interested agencies and individuals. “Yet despite the importance of adoption to many groups, it remains an under researched area and a topic on which the data are incomplete” (Stolley, 1993, p.26).

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (2000) reported that over the past 50 years, there have been only sporadic attempts to push for collecting complete information regarding numbers and demographics on adoption. There had only been estimates of the number of adoptees in the United States, but the latest United States Census (2000) gave the first ever look at the actual numbers of adoptees. The reported 1.6 million adoptees are approximately 3% of the United States’ 165 million children (Tucson Citizen, August 22, 2003, p. A).

From Colonial Times through World War II, healthy children, from within the borders of the United States, were adopted by American parents of the same race. Altstein and Simon (1991) state that intercountry adoption (ICA), the adoption of foreign-born children, began primarily in North America after World War II as a charitable response to the thousands of

orphaned European children. Brodzinsky, Smith, and Brodzinsky (1998) relate that soon after World War II intercountry adoption began and then escalated after the Korean War. Altstein and Simon (1991) state that Americans showed great interest in ICA during the mid 1940's. Many Americans saw ICA as a solution to the problem of parentless children. This may have been due to a feeling of obligation after our country's participation in a large world war. Also it may have been due to the great number of our soldiers who saw first hand the devastation of the war and the need to help orphaned children.

According to Altstein and Simon (1991), the majority of orphaned children, following World War II, were from Germany and Greece. Because of the desperate need of orphans in Greece, almost one-third of the children adopted by United States' parents came from that country. Many of the children were orphaned due to World War II, but others lost their parents when the Greek Civil War of 1946 broke out. Post World War II ICA adoption lasted only about five years. Altstein and Simon state that this short period of ICA adoption ended "when the European continent was rebuilt and its economy stabilized. The problem of orphaned children was basically solved" (p. 6).

While United States' citizens viewed the orphan problem in Europe as solved, the Korean War, which started in 1950 and lasted until 1953, followed and, according to the Korea Times (2000, June 24), left 100,000 children without parents and in need of homes (Retrieved June 27, 2004, from <http://80-web.lexis-nexis.com.ezproxy>). Americans again responded to the plight of orphans by adopting Korean children. This type of ICA is also a transracial adoption (TRA), the adoption of children of one race by parents of another. In defining transracial adoption, Triseliotis, Shireman, and Hundleby (1997) state that the unequal distribution of social and economic resources has resulted in mainly the adoption of a black, Asian, Native American, or Hispanic child by a white family. Transracial adoptees can be adopted from countries embroiled in war, poor countries, and Western countries own populations.

Altstein and Simon (1991) state that never before had large numbers of Western couples, mostly in the United States, adopted children who were racially and culturally different from their parents. Altstein and Simon (2000) relate that between the years of 1953 and 1962 American families adopted approximately 15,000 foreign-born children.

During the 1950's, one couple, Harry and Bertha Holt (2000), changed the face of adoption in the United States. They adopted eight Amerasian children, children of one American and one Asian parent, and had a federal law changed in order to do this. They pioneered international adoption and started what has become the largest international adoption agency in the world (Holt International, A Historical Perspective, para. 1, 2, & 3. Retrieved June 26, 2004, from <http://www.holtintl.org/historical.shtml>).

B. Holt (1956) states that in 1954 the Holts heard a talk by Dr. Robert Pierce of World Vision Inc. World Vision Inc. was a religious organization that sent people around the world helping others in need. Dr. Pierce spoke about the desperate need of Korean orphans. The Holts immediately volunteered to financially support ten children. Although the Holts had six biological children, they indicated that they were being called by God to do more. Dr. Pierce had asked if anyone would volunteer to go to Korea to help. Although Harry Holt had had a major heart attack in 1950, he and his family felt he should go. In Korea, Mr. Holt stayed in Seoul in a spare bedroom of the Overseas Director of World Vision. From there he traveled over six hundred miles around South Korea looking for the orphans who were most in need of help. He found that Amerasian children were often not accepted by

Koreans, and were often considered a source of shame. Once Amerasian babies became toddlers and could no longer remain hidden in the house, many were abandoned on the streets. Seeing the unbelievable need, Harry Holt added ten more children to the ones his family was already supporting financially, and then adopted eight Amerasian children.

B. Holt (1956) states that in order to bring these children back to the United States, the Refugee Relief Act had to be changed. This law had allowed for only two immigrant visas to be issued to eligible orphans being adopted by a United States citizen. Holt relates that with the help of senator Richard Neuberger, Bill S2312, a bill for the relief of certain war orphans, was passed and President Eisenhower signed it. In 1955, Mr. Holt brought home his own eight adopted orphans, plus four more who were adopted by different couples.

According to B. Holt (1972), Harry Holt returned to Korea in March of 1956 and, with workers, built their first small orphanage. By 1961, Bertha Holt, with her youngest biological daughter, and the eight adopted children, moved to Korea to be with her husband. From this humble beginning, the largest international adoption agency in the world was formed (Holt International, A Historical Perspective, para. 1. Retrieved June 26, 2004,

from <http://www.holtintl.org/historical.shtml>). Other adoption agencies were also placing foreign-born children at that time. Altstein and Simon (2000) relate that in an eleven-year period, between 1965 and 1977, American families adopted 37,469 foreign-born children. Approximately 65% of the adopted children came from Asia, mainly from the Republic of Korea. At least 65% of these adoptions were both ICA and TRA.

A possible reason for ICA and TRA occurring during that eleven-year period was that the 1960's had been a decade of change. Due to the Civil Rights movement and the Viet Nam War, a new tolerance and acceptance of differences affected many Americans who had lived through this era. According to Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990), many people who believed in the civil rights movement also believed in transracial and special needs adoption. Special needs adoption is the adoption of children who are older, bi-racial, ones who had to be placed with their siblings, or children who had mental, physical, or emotional problems. By the late 1970's and early 1980's, United States' children who were previously considered unadoptable, were being placed. According to Groze (1996), special needs adoption gained momentum in the 1970's. The author states that in the past 25 years adoption

has finally become the preferred option when children with special needs cannot live with their birth families.

For the purpose of this paper the following definition for non-special needs will be used: non-special needs will refer to children who are not older, biracial, part of a sibling group that needs to be placed together, or not ones with physical, mental, or emotional problems. This is based on this author's concern over the possible confusion of the terms "healthy" and "special needs". A special needs child may be very healthy, but may be older, biracial etc. Non-special needs will refer to all other children who do not fit in the special needs category.

By the 1980's, United States interest in ICA was still due to philanthropic reasons and to the needs of childless couples. Due to a lower birth rate in the 1980's couples were looking for children to adopt. There were many reasons for this decline in birth rate in the United States; birth control, abortion, couples delaying the start of a family until after settling in careers, and young unwed mothers deciding to keep their babies. Altstein and Simon (1991) state that American couples and single adults turned to Third-World countries with high birth rates to replace the lack of healthy infants in the West.

During the 1970's and 1980's, both non-special needs and special needs children from other countries were also being transracially adopted. International adoptions were on the rise and a unique group of intercountry transracial special needs children, were being adopted. Again, due to lower birth rates and the cultural acceptance of differences in America, the trend and demand for this type of adoption not only continued through the 1990's, but the numbers of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees continue to increase (Holt International, 1997). Adoption in America has grown from the practice of placing healthy white children from within the United States, in American homes with parents of the same race, to the practice of ICA, TRA, and special needs adoptions.

Today, increasing numbers of children fall under the category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Groze (1996) relates that the fall of communism in the 1990s, along with the simultaneous expansion of the United States into a global economy, resulted in the adoption of children from Eastern Europe and other formerly communist countries. Children from these countries often have had “unique health and developmental problems; many of the adopted children were older and had experienced extreme poverty and neglect” (p. 131).

Currently there remains a high demand in the United States for adoptable children. An increasing percentage of Americans continue to seek children from within the United States and from other countries for adoption. In 2002, the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) found that approximately 300,000 women, 18–44 years of age, were currently taking concrete steps towards adoption, compared to 232,000 in 1995 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2002 & 1995). According to the data from the NSFG, about 1% of women, 18-44 years of age, or 600,000, have ever adopted a child (National Center for Health Statistics, 2002).

Given this increase in demand, a large number of intercountry adoptions occur yearly in the United States. Simon and Altstein (2000) illustrate this trend by showing the increase in the number of total intercountry adoptions from 1989, when 7,948 children were placed, to 1998, when 15,774 children were placed. Since this trend in adoption continues to grow, the numbers of both children and adults affected by this trend continues to increase. According to Liow (1994), the number of non-Caucasian children needing adoption worldwide is tremendous. Yet the adults financially able and seeking to adopt are primarily Caucasian. Some information concerning the separate categories of ICA, TRA, and special

needs is available. However, information about children who fit into all three categories of ICA, TRA, and special needs is not readily available.

Statement of the Problem

Intercountry transracial special needs children adopted in the 1980's have become teenagers and young adults. According to Groze (1996), "little is known about the life of older and special needs adoptees as they reach adulthood" (p. 140). He states that there is a need for information based in research. Children from this special category continue to be adopted, yet research on how they fare is extremely limited.

Rosenthal and Groze (1992) state that, "children of various races, ages, and backgrounds and often with significant emotional, physical, or mental impairments comprise an increased proportion of the population of adopted children" (p. 1). These children often need special services from doctors, hospitals, schools, counselors, and adoption agencies. Thus, the numbers of people in the United States affected by adoption is increasing. Rosenthal and Groze relate that the 'model adoptive couple' has been extended to include other family types. These include single parents, minority parents, parents of modest financial means, and foster parents who later adopt. Groze (1996) states that, "medically fragile children and the

stream of international adoptions represent ongoing issues. Research in adoption needs to explore these new issues” (p.140).

Lewin (1997) states that Americans do not know how to answer the question of how children of intercountry adoptions fare. Brodzinsky, Smith, and Brodzinsky (1998) relate that, “Although there has been concern about the outcome of intercountry adoption, relatively little research has been conducted in this area” (p. 75). Research on the various issues of intercountry adoption, transracial adoption, and special needs adoption is available. However, in a careful review of the literature, very little research has identified how this unique group of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees has fared, emotionally, medically, socially, educationally, and occupationally.

The present exploratory study is designed to examine how a particular group of teenagers and young adults who were adopted as children, have fared. All of the subjects fall under the specific classification of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Data from this author’s study may not only help future parents, adoptees, and parents with young adoptees, but may also help adoption and governmental agencies. Therefore, this exploratory

study will look at both parents and their adopted children; the children who fit into the category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees.

Research Questions

This present exploratory study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the parents of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements and later at the time of this survey.
2. What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements, and later at the time of this survey?
3. To what extent were successes in schooling and employment achieved?
4. What were the parents' perceptions of the adoption experience?
5. To what extent were problems encountered regarding adoption age?

Need For The Study

Although a large number of children, worldwide, are in need of adoption due to poverty and neglect, many die before the adoption process can be started. In 2002, approximately 10,889,000 of the world's children, under the age of five, died from malnutrition and disease. That was approximately 29,833 children, age five and under, who were dying everyday (UNICEF, 2004).

Many of the children who are age five and under in Third World Countries have been abandoned and placed in overcrowded orphanages. Liow (1994) states that due to poverty and cultural rejection, adoption of these children within their own countries is extremely limited. According to Brodzinsky et al. (1998) a sizable percentage of Third World Countries adoptees, "have special needs" (p. 75). With the great number of children worldwide, both healthy and with special needs, waiting to be adopted; and with the demand by adults in the United States for adoptable children, research to determine how these children have progressed is needed. This study was pursued to increase data based on the outcomes of previous adoptions of this unique group of intercountry transracial special needs children.

Significance of Study

This study is needed to provide information to parents planning to adopt, and to give information to parents who currently have young adoptees who are classified as intercountry transracial special needs children. It is also needed to provide current information to adoption and governmental agencies. Such information may affect current adoption policies within the United States. The results from this study highlight the unique group of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees, who were adopted between 1980 and 1990 in Tucson, Arizona.

Findings from this study may provide new information to possible future parents to help them make informed decisions about adopting intercountry transracial special needs children. It may also give information to current parents of young adopted children from this group. Findings should similarly assist adoption and governmental agencies in their practice and could affect government policies regarding adoption of this unique group. As Groze states, "Adoption, while it may change, is here to stay, and we need to have better information that is based in research" (1996, p. 140). This study will be a first step in filling the gap of understanding about how

adoptions of intercountry transracial special needs children have fared and about the variables that relate to their successes and problems.

Results from this study will help in a number of ways:

1. The study will provide initial survey data for further research in the area of intercountry transracial special needs adoption.
2. Information from this study will assist prospective parents, current parents of young adoptees, adoption agencies, doctors, social workers, counselors, and school systems who work with these children. It may provide data and examples for a better understanding of these children and the issues that they, their parents, and society face. This information can be applied to many different areas to make an easier transition for these children.
3. This research will provide, through a definition of terms, data, examples, and limitations, information to assist prospective parents to make informed decisions within their own lives about adopting an intercountry transracial special needs child. It will also provide information to parents who have already adopted young children from this special group.

Assumptions

The assumptions upon which this study were based are as follows:

1. The subjects are typical of the intercounty transracial special needs children adopted during the years of 1980 to 1990.
2. The impact of sixteen years between the last adoptions in 1990 and the current study will have been a significant time to see how the adoptees have fared.
3. The survey instrument is appropriate to obtaining this type of data.
4. Honest responses from the parents surveyed are expected.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to a convenience sample population provided by Catholic Social Services in Tucson, Arizona.
2. The findings may be somewhat limited since Holt International, in association with Catholic Social Services, placed only intercountry children with special needs in the Tucson area. Therefore, a larger influx of these children occurred in Tucson than in other cities where only healthy children were placed. By having a larger group, the effects on the medical profession, the educational system, and post-adoption

agency services may have been different than in cities with smaller groups.

3. The sample size was limited to 14 families.
4. The survey consisted of a convenience sample of 14 single and married parents who stayed in the Tucson area. The children were adopted from 1980 to 1990.
5. The instrument has not been tested for validity or reliability, but it was reviewed by the author's doctoral committee and the Federal Regulation Committee.

Definition of Terms

Adoption- a legal procedure that provides a permanent home and family for a child whose biological parents are unable, unwilling, or legally prohibited from keeping the child.

Adoption Subsidy – the provision for financial, medical, and/or service assistance.

Amerasian - a child who has one American parent and one Asian parent.

Bonding - the ability of children to attach to their parents and others.

Closed Adoption – the adoption of a child, where the birth parent is not allowed to remain in the child’s life, even if he/she chooses.

Disruption - an adoption which does not continue and results in the child returning to foster care or to another set of adoptive parents.

Dissolution - an adoption that fails after finalization, resulting in the child returning to foster care or to another set of adoptive parents.

Finalized- when the adoption becomes final through a court of law.

Intercountry Adoption - (ICA) the adoption of children from one country by parents from another country.

Non-Special Needs Adoption – all adoptable children who are not older, bi-racial, part of a sibling group, or not ones with physical, mental, or emotional problems.

Open Adoption - the adoption of a child, where the birth parent often chooses the adoptive parents, and can remain in the child’s life if he/she chooses.

Placement- a child is placed in an adoptive home with the belief that the child will be adopted in that home. The child remains in that home for a number of months, and is monitored, before the adoption is finalized.

Special Needs Adoption – all adoptable children who are older, bi-racial, siblings who have to be placed together, or children who have mental, physical, or emotional problems. This may occur within the same country, or between countries.

Title 1 – a federal program that provides financial assistance to local schools to meet educational needs of children from preschool to high school.

Title 2 – part of federal legislation designed to eliminate barriers to the adoption of special needs children.

Transracial Adoption - (TRA) children of one race, who were adopted by parents of another race. This may occur within the same country, or between countries.

Summary

This chapter has provided an introduction to a study of how intercountry transracial special needs adoptees, today's teenagers and young adults, have fared. It has included the context of the problem, the statement of the problem, and the need and significance of the problem. Assumptions, limitations, and definitions of terms used in the study were also included.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter includes the history of change in America's adoption practices. It also includes the legal and philosophical reasons behind the changes, and current research findings. Current and controversial issues regarding the separate categories of intercountry, transracial, special needs adoptions are discussed. How these categories affect today's adoption practices is also looked at.

History of Legal and Philosophical Change

Adoption has been the topic of many research studies, but the issues in adoption continue to evolve as the laws and practices of adoption change. "The oldest set of written adoption law is found in the Code of Hammurabi, 2800 B.C.," (Brodzinsky and Schechter, 1990, p. 274). Codes were the early attempts to systematize numerous laws into simple collections. Most European countries, with the exception of England, built their law on the Roman and later Napoleonic codes. Both Roman and Napoleonic codes had

strict laws regarding adoption, and both made adoption a difficult process. The child's welfare was never the most important priority (Brodzinsky & Schechter, 1990).

According to Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990), United States law had its roots in English common law, but English common law did not provide for adoption. The major obstacle for the English was the inheritance of land. Land could only be transferred to a person in the same blood lineage. Because of this common law practice, adoption was not put into English statute until 1926.

Americans broke away from English law, in the area of adoption, and developed their own law. Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) state that the first adoption statute in the United States was passed by the Massachusetts legislature in 1851. Although adoption had existed since colonial times, it had existed without the assistance of an organization or agency to help the adoptees and the adoptive parents. With the passage of the statute in Massachusetts, the philosophy behind adoption began to promote the welfare of the child. Adoption began to be thought of as a solution for the needs of homeless children. Basically only white children were thought to be adoptable. Others were put in almshouses with the poor, infirmed, and

mentally ill. Most adoptions were still done informally, or the adoptive parents could legally record the act. The process was similar to the one used to record a real estate deed. The child could also be indentured to parents. The authors relate that with the onset of the industrial revolution in the early 1800's, people gravitated toward the city, and city populations became much larger than an apprentice system could handle. There was no longer a need for indentured children. The indenturing process ended and homeless children became a financial drain on the Eastern cities. A change in the adoption practice was needed.

“Revelations from Dorothea Dix’s 1844 inspection of almshouses about the condition of the children in these institutions, and concern about the health and welfare of children in crowded city slums in the United States, led to demands for better care for children” (Triseliotis, Shireman, & Hundleby, 1997, p. 5). This led to large orphanages funded by different religious groups and individual philanthropists. “However, these institutions had serious problems with infant mortality and increasingly attempts were made to place children with families” (Triseliotis, Shireman, & Hundleby, 1997, p. 5).

Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) state that Charles Loring Brace, founder of the New York Children's Aid Society, believed homeless children could be trained to aid farmers in their work. He proposed the "orphan train movement".

Beginning in the 1850's the Children's Aid Society put thousands of white orphans on trains and boats and took them across the country to the Western part of the United States. Adoptive parents, mainly Protestant farmers, were allowed to select the children they wanted. By 1859, 4,000 to 5,000 children had been placed in the West. The authors relate that Catholic immigrants protested when they became aware that mainly Protestants were adopting their children. Many of the Catholic poor then refused to give up their children for adoption. This led to future adoption statutes requiring religious matching.

According to Holt (1992), the orphan train program continued for over seventy years. It ceased to operate during the 1920's for a number of reasons, but primarily because there was a change in societal attitudes toward this practice in adoption. Again the philosophy behind the practices changed.

Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) relate that before World War I, most adoptions occurred without the help of an organization or agency. A low birth rate, due to World War I, and the influenza outbreak that followed, caused a new interest in adoption. Individual people arranging adoptions made huge profits. Often these people were accused of being unethical and their practices were referred to as "black market adoptions." Society again protested, and a new practice, agency adoption, arose. Brodzinsky, Smith, and Brodzinsky (1998) state that by 1929, as a result of the protests, all states had developed some form of judicial supervision regarding adoption. Agencies were formed to compete with and replace the unethical individuals who had made huge profits, and had had little regard for the child.

Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) relate that judicial supervision and agency adoption continued until after World War II when there was again renewed interest in adoption. Agencies reported that prospective parents wanted only healthy infants. Therefore, only children without physical, emotional, or mental defects were promised to those wanting to adopt. During the 1950's, Senate investigations into "black-market adoptions," and public concern over the rigidity of agency practices, led to a National Conference on Adoption. The authors relate that prior to this time, society

seemed concerned with the problems orphaned children caused society, the reaction of the people wanting to adopt, and the unethical people making money from adoption. With the Senate Investigations, the child finally became the focus of the adoption practice.

Another shift in adoption practices occurred after the Korean and Vietnam Wars, when Americans began to adopt orphaned children from Asia. Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) state that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's influenced this shift, because many advocates of integration were also advocates of transracial adoption (TRA), the adoption of children of one race by parents of another. Brodzinsky, et al. (1998) relate that in 1972, the practice of transracial adoption became an issue of concern to the National Association of Black Social Workers of the United States (NABSW). They condemned this philosophy and practice as cultural genocide; thus limiting the number of infants available to white couples at that time.

Current and Controversial Issues

Changes in the history of adoption practices occurred slowly over the years. Eventually the changes were designed to help the children, not just

the parents or society. Many people believed that a number of changes, such as transracial adoption, were helpful to children. Yet other people considered the changes to be cultural genocide.

Park (1994) states that similar to the NABSW beliefs, there was also concern by some Koreans about an issue they saw as one type of forced child migration; the adoption of Korean born intercountry adoptees. The author relates that, “the adoption of Korean born children by Americans has been the strongest intercountry adoption linkage in the world. From 1958 to 1991, Americans adopted 81,000 Korean-born children representing 50 percent of all intercountry adoptions in the United States” (p. 1). Park’s concern is that most of the adoptees were placed as infants, unable to participate in the migration decision-making process. She related that they were taken from South Korea and placed into the United States.

However, Park (1994) does state that socio-cultural factors in South Korea make local adoption undesirable. The lack of adoptions by Koreans, results in more than 22,000 children in child welfare institutions at any given time.

Park also relates that over 40% of intercountry adoptees are born with medical problems. Many of these problems have been due to complications associated with premature births. She continues, that because of Korean

cultural attitudes, children in institutions are not often welcomed into South Korean society.

The most bitter critics of intercountry adoption, according to Bagley, Young, and Scully (1993) “allege that wealthy adopters from the West come to the poor countries of the Third World in the wake of war, earthquake or famine, and take many healthy children, leaving behind older or handicapped children to remain in institutional care” (p. 136). However, these authors also convey that advocates of intercountry adoption vigorously contest statements like these and point out that intercountry adoption is often a by-product of in-country child welfare programs. They state that these children, many of whom are in fact handicapped, would die of malnutrition or lack of medical care. Other children, not adopted, would suffer severe deprivation in orphanages in the Third World Countries.

Simon and Altstein (2000) state that national pride and a country’s improved economy, reduces that number of orphans available for foreign adoption. They relate that an official in the South Korean Health Ministry stated that by 1996 Korea would stop foreign adoption, although this goal would not include the adoption of those who are handicapped.

Another current issue, reported on by Rosenthal and Groze (1992), is special needs adoption. Special needs adoption started in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Special needs children were older, bi-racial, siblings who needed to be placed together, or children who had mental, physical, or emotional problems. Adoption philosophy and practices again changed dramatically and American children, who were previously considered unadoptable, were now being placed. Also healthy and special needs intercountry children were being transracially adopted. Special needs adoptions have continued and increased since that time (L. Downey, Catholic Social Services, 2004).

In the 1990's some corporations volunteered to improve part of a current issue that has stopped many people from adopting. That issue is money. Adoptions, especially foreign adoptions, can be very expensive. Certain companies have helped their employees and have added a positive change to the adoption process. These corporations began to provide financial assistance to their American employees who adopted children from within the United States and from other countries. Allstate Insurance Company made a commitment to assist employees with an adoption reimbursement program. The costs covered could include agency and legal

fees, transportation to obtain the child, and medical expenses not covered by insurance. Allstate reimburses parents with up to \$2,500 after the employee submits the final adoption decree (Allstate Now, October 1993).

Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., through their employee benefits program, reimburses employees for specific adoption-related expenses up to the maximum of \$5000 per adopted child. The company also offers the primary care providers for the child, up to a 100% paid leave of absence for four weeks. If both parents work for Turner Broadcasting, both parents are eligible collectively for the four weeks paid leave (Turner Employee Benefits Connection, 1/1/99).

In 1996, President Clinton was instrumental in changing an issue of adoption practices. Brodzinsky, et al. (1998) state that the former President signed legislation that outlawed race matching within the United States. This was the process of matching a child only with parents of the same race. The legislation, P.L. 104-542, was geared “toward the process of adoption of children who continue to linger in foster homes - many of whom are minority youngsters - by eliminating race as a barrier to a timely adoptive placement” (p .68). This policy is being fought by some Native American Tribes (Tucson Citizen, May 10, 1996).

While many believe that P.L. 104-542 is a positive change, Altstein and Simon (2002) relate that Native Americans have a special concern. The authors state that in 1969, a sixteen-state report indicated that about 89% of all Native American children in foster care were placed transracially. Altstein and Simon state that, “Reduction of transracial placements is supported in Title I, in which all proceedings dealing with Native American child custody are transferred to tribal jurisdiction” (p. 19). Title II allows an Indian child to be taken from an Indian parent or Indian custodian only as a last resort. The authors relate that the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (PL95-608) “was designed to prevent the decimation of Indian tribes and the breakdown of Indian families by transracial placement of Native American children” (p. 18).

Three of the following types of adoption remain controversial to some individuals and groups. The three types of adoption are: intercountry; transracial; and special needs. According to the United States State Department, more than 20,000 foreign-born children are being adopted by American families each year (Archive April 21, 2006). In 2005 Americans adopted 22,739 orphans from around the world. Many of the 22,739

adoptees were not only intercountry, but some were transracial adoptees, and some were special needs adoptees.

For transracially and internationally adopted children, there is concern about their ethnic identity. Huh and Reid (2000) state that for transracial and intercountry adoptees, ethnic identity may be a feeling of connection with both their cultural past and their present adoptive heritage. “A strong argument against intercountry transracial adoptions concerns the development of a child’s ethnic identity. If children are uprooted from their own culture, their sense of ethnic identity may become confused or conflicted” (p. 75). Problems may occur if the child or teenager feels ashamed or embarrassed of his/her racial background and becomes confused about who he/she really is. However, Altstein and Simon (1996) found positive results from their twenty-year longitudinal study, which ended with 86 families who had transracial adoptees. “Overall, we found that both during adolescence and later as adults, the TRAs clearly were aware of and comfortable with their racial identity” (p. 19). The authors stated that the reasons the adult adoptees gave for a positive response to TRA was, “Transracial adoption is the best practical alternative” and “having a loving, secure relationship in a family setting is all important” (p. 20).

An issue of concern for American parents adopting from other countries, according to Babb and Laws (1997), is that many children who have been placed as “healthy” infants and toddlers, have later been found to have special needs. A related issue is “that when someone adopts an internationally born child with special needs, there is almost never a financial ‘safety net’ as there is with domestically adopted children” (p. 181). Children adopted through state adoption agencies usually have some guaranteed funding for physical, mental, or emotional needs.

An issue for parents in China is their government’s limit of one child per family. As a result of this limitation, and a change in Chinese and some eastern European countries’ practices, foreigners can now adopt orphaned children from these nations. Thus a greater number of infants have become available to American parents. Simon and Altstein (2000) state that in 1989 China allowed only 33 of their orphans to be adopted by parents in other countries. By 1998, China became the largest supplier of Asian born adoptees with 4,206 children adopted by parents in foreign countries. The authors state the reason for this, is the lack of adoptions within China and the government limit of one child per family. Thus Chinese couples that have a second child often are forced to give up one child to a state run orphanage.

Many Chinese couples prefer a male child who is generally more prized, and who can support the parents when they are old.

Sarri, Baik, and Bombyte (1998) relate that China and South Korea are patriarchal societies. This has resulted in the preference for male children. Consequently many more females are placed in intercountry adoption.

Children from Romania and the former Soviet Union became available to American parents for adoption after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union in 1989. An issue for parents who adopted these children was that some of the children had been severely deprived and showed problems with attachment disorders. These children were unable to bond or attach to their new parents or others.

Bonding treatment centers, such as Evergreen in Colorado, have been working with children with attachment problems for years. New centers and support groups have formed to work with these children. In Tucson, Arizona, the Esperero Family Center offers family workshops and therapy sessions dealing with attachment disorders (Tucson Citizen, February 3, 1999, p. 1B). Thais Tepper, an adoptive mother, became an advocate to help children with attachment disorders. Tepper founded a support organization

called the Parent Network for the Post-Institutionalized Child. The group now has about 1,500 members (New York Times, May 24, 1998, Section 6, p. 24).

Support organizations and family centers have helped adoptive parents whose children have had bonding problems and many of these adoptions have had positive outcomes. In a New York Times article, Talbot wrote about Victor Groza, an adoption specialist at Case Western Reserve University. In a study of 229 American families who adopted Romanian children, Groza found that 78 % of the parents rated the overall impact of the adoption on the family as very positive, and 97% said they never thought about relinquishing the child (Talbot, 1998, New York Times).

War is an issue that is always on the horizon, and orphans are one tragic consequence of war. A recent group of orphans are those in Pristina, Kosovo. Aid workers and people from the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) found twenty children in just one orphanage. Some of those found, now rock themselves in their cribs, a symptom of neglect. Orphanages are a new concept in Kosovo and one of the many devastating effects of the war (N.B.C. News, July 4, 1999). The new war in Iraq will, like other wars, leave orphans behind. Liberia is another country

where war has left orphans as victims. At the end of these wars, foreigners may again want to, and be allowed to adopt children.

Another intercountry issue has occurred in Cambodia, one of the poorest countries in the World. Two years ago, both France and the United States, the two largest markets for adopting Cambodian children, put a hold on adoptions. They found that poor women had been selling their children for as little as \$20.00, and that other children had been stolen by kidnappers to sell in foreign countries. Although the U.S. and France suspended adoptions, their suspension has only slowed the process. The markets have diminished, but due to poverty, the process of selling children still continues (McDowell, 2004, The Arizona Republic).

A new issue in adoption involves the Internet. Many families search for children through both reputable and non-reputable people on the web. Some individuals who arrange these adoptions are called facilitators. The facilitators do not have to be licensed social workers, or have any kind of credentials. Recently a set of twins was promised to a San Diego couple, who had cared for the twins for two months. The biological mother came to visit the twins, and asked to have a final private goodbye. The adoptive parents allowed the biological mother to take the twins from their home.

The mother then gave the twins to another couple in England. Following news reports and public outcries, the biological mother stated that she wanted the twins back. The English Parliament wants to have stricter adoption laws that will not allow this type of unfortunate event from occurring again (N.B.C. News, Today Show, January 23, 2001).

Two other issues have also changed today's adoption practices. During the past twenty years, many foster parents have adopted their foster children. The issue is that some of these parents turn out to be single. Also other single parent adoptions now occur both within the United States and with children from other countries. Although many biological children now grow up in single parent homes, there is some controversy about single parent adoptions. The other controversial issue is the adoption of children by gay parents. Triseliotis, Shireman and Hundleby (1997) discuss the lack of research on gay and lesbian adoptive or foster parents. However, the authors quote smaller studies done on gay parents. Their conclusion is that, "overall studies suggest homosexual parents carry out parenting roles much as do heterosexual parents" (p. 219).

Another issue important to the process of adoption, is the degree of involvement which birth parents and adoptive parents have with each other.

According to Triseliotis, et al. (1997) until recently adoptions have been 'closed.' In closed adoptions, neither the adoptive family, nor the birth family, know each other's identity. Open adoptions, a concept started recently, range the continuum from the sharing of information and the exchange of a few pictures with the birth mother, to adoptions in which the birth parent and family become a part of the adoptive family's life. However, an open adoption is not possible for the many children abandoned in foreign countries on streets and in orphanages.

Triseliotis et al. (1997) relate that adoption has changed and evolved over the years, reflecting the changes in the society. The scarcity of infants available for adoption has resulted in the placement of older children with 'special needs' and the increased interest in international adoptions. With these developments, in addition to new theory about the adoptive family, post-adoption services have developed to support the adoptive family and other members of the adoption triangle. The adoption triangle consists of the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and the child.

Today no longer are white healthy children the only ones desired nor the only ones adopted. According to Stolley (1993) emphasis on children with special needs is especially important due to the decline in the numbers

of infants available for adoption. Attention has focused on the needs and availability of other children and the incentives that might make the adoption available to more adoption seekers. She states that some evidence suggests the adopters with no fertility problems who adopt for religious, social, or humanitarian reasons, may be more likely to ask for and select children with special needs. These special needs children may also be intercountry transracial adoptees. As Groze (1998) stated, “adoption, while it may change, it is here to stay, and we need to have information based in research” (p. 140).

Research Findings

According to Groze (1996) medically fragile children and the high numbers of international adoptees represent ongoing issues. He believes that research in adoption needs to explore these new issues.

Carstens and Julia (2000) conducted research on the ethnoracial awareness of 37 families who had adopted children from abroad, ICAs, who were racially different from their parents, TRAs. The authors examined the ethnoracial awareness of ICA and TRA families using the variables of a pre-placement visit to the child’s birth country, and the use of a cultural consultant. A pre-placement visit by the adoptive parents was the primary

independent variable, measured in relation to the family's use of a cultural consultant. Carstens and Julia used open-ended questions to support a descriptive study of post-measure-only design. They defined a cultural consultant as a person from the child's ethnoracial group or home country. The cultural consultant was expected to inform and educate the parents and the child on issues related to the child's ethnoracial heritage. A significant association was found between the use of a cultural consultant and a pre-placement visit to the child's birth country. The authors suggest that private adoption agencies need to incorporate more rigorous standards of assessing the sociocultural environment of potential parents, including the use of a cultural consultant. They stressed whenever possible agencies should encourage a visit to the adoptee's country of origin.

McIntyre (2001) conducted research on the lived experiences of eight white adoptive parents of intercountry transracial young adults. A young adult was defined for this study as a young person in his/her 20's who had been adopted as a child under the age of six. The author interviewed the adoptive families who had been identified as culturally competent by adoption agency professionals. Parents in the study, who expressed a willingness to adopt special needs children, had explored their readiness to

parent these children and had carefully chosen the special needs category in which they felt they had some of the necessary skills and resources.

McIntyre drew nine themes from her interviews with the parents. One conclusion that she described was that white parents, who remained in mainly white neighborhoods, found it difficult to make connections with racial and cultural peers and mentors for their children. However, she also found that white parents, who lived in more diverse urban areas, experienced more racial unrest and safety issues. Some parents indicated that finding the right environment that supported racial identity and cultural needs, and one that embraced interracial families was challenging. Other parents, who had adopted special needs children, described special needs as adding another complex layer to their environment. She also found a great depth of commitment by the parents who adopted a sibling group. Her study highlighted the critical need for pre and post-adoption screening by the adoption agency. She found that the parents needed information, training, and open and honest communication from their adoption agency. Her study suggested that the agency “must take the lead in helping prospective parents of intercountry transracial children assess not only their motivation to adopt, but also their personal strengths to parent effectively children of color and

children who potentially may be challenged with special needs” (p. 242).

Parents also stated that they needed more and ongoing parenting classes. All of the white adoptive parents stated that they would have welcomed adoptive parent training when they adopted their children back in the 1970’s and 1980’s. McIntyre believes that future research “should be focused less on differences and pros and cons of same race adoption versus transracial and transcultural adoption, and more on what these adoptive families need to strengthen competency” (p. 244).

Rojewski and Rojewski (2001) examined post adoption issues in intercountry adoptions from China. The authors used the Internet to contact and survey 300 families in the United States and Canada who had adopted children from China. The survey instrument used by the authors, consisted of four parts: general information about the adoptees, parents’ demographics, questions about parent attitudes toward adoption, and a cultural attitude survey. The authors found from their study that most of the parents had a balanced approach toward acknowledging their child’s Chinese heritage. Usually the parents’ decisions were based on the child’s age. The authors believe that one part of their study will become more prominent as the children age. Approximately two-thirds of the parents

studied did not live in an integrated neighborhood. The authors question whether this limited contact with Chinese peers and adults, will have a later negative influence on identity formations. Since adoption from China was almost nonexistent before the 1990s, some of the children are just becoming old enough to address identity formation. Rojewski and Rojewski stress the need for further research. “While we can easily describe the challenges facing adoptive parents, it is often difficult to practice. There is still much to be learned” (p. 166). The authors state that, “Regardless of adoptive parents’ motives, intercountry adoption has steadily increased over the past decade to where the practice is now a permanent part of the America’s culture” (p. 3).

Nam Soon Huh and William J. Reid (2000) also conducted research on intercountry transracial adoption and ethnic identity. They relate that intercountry adoptions of Chinese children are expected to reach a level of 5,000 to 6,000 a year. They state that these children may form an ethnic identity that connects with their past culture and with their present culture. Huh and Reid report that their study examined the kinds of ethnic identities developed by intercountry transracial adoptees. The subjects in their study were 30 families of Korean adoptees. The children were adopted under 15

months of age, they were at least 9 years of age at the time of the study, and they were fully Korean. The authors anticipated and found, that children who participated in many Korean cultural activities scored higher on Korean identity than their low participating counterparts. Having their parents' encouragement and participation in the cultural activities seemed critical to the process.

Simon and Altstein (2000) updated their longitudinal study of transracial adoptees. Their study began in 1972 and continued in 1979, 1984, and 1991. The study followed the adoptees from infancy to young adulthood. In the authors' second edition, they reported on the final phase of their study as the adoptees reached adulthood. They related that none of the families had a disrupted adoption. During pre-adolescent years, 20% of the families' adoptees stole from their parents or brothers and sisters. Four years later when the authors surveyed the families again, the stealing had ended. During the adolescent years, there were some problems with drugs, drinking, and runaways; however the adoptees were no different than the families' birth children in the likelihood of problems.

In the last phase of the study most of the adoptees were no longer living at home. They remained in touch with their parents as much as the

birth children did. They also found that during adolescence and young adulthood, the TRAs were comfortable with their racial identity. Both the adult TRAs and adult birth children talked about how their lives had been enriched by the transracial adoption in their families.

Reilly and Platz (2003) conducted a recent study on the adoption of special needs children. They defined special needs children as, “children who are older, from racial or ethnic minorities, members of sibling groups, and/or who have special emotional, behavioral, developmental and/or medical problems” (p. 781). They state, that there is, an increased number of children with special needs, being placed in adoptive homes. The first purpose of their study was to examine demographic differences that might exist between child, parent, and agency characteristics. Their second purpose was to examine the child, parent, and agency characteristics to see if there was a predictive value in relation to a positive adoption outcome. Their study included all families in the state of Nevada who were receiving an adoption subsidy or families who had an adoption subsidy agreement in place. An adoption subsidy may include the provision of financial, medical, and/or service assistance.

Reilly and Platz found in their study that most parents reported a good adoption outcome. The parents did report on pronounced behavior problems and disabilities in the children they adopted. The authors believe their study reinforces the idea that the problems of many special needs children manifest many years after placement. The authors believe that post adoption services are necessary throughout the child's life cycle. A large portion, 58% of the families, reported not receiving enough information about their child. Other families, 37%, reported that their child's problems were more serious than reported by their adoption agency. Families reported significant barriers in receiving post-adoptive services. Many were concerned with not knowing where to go for help, and that those who were supposed to help did not understand the families' problems. The authors were surprised to find that there were no differences between former foster parents who adopted, and new parents on adoption outcomes. This was contrary to other research. Reilly and Platz believe this indicates that new parents, despite the challenges of special needs children, can be as effective as former foster parents.

Research from these current studies has shown that the sociocultural environment of potential adopters must be considered and a visit to the

child's country of origin, by the adoptive parents is very helpful. Also that a cultural consultant, someone to help with the child's birth culture, is needed because children who participated in activities from their birth culture, scored higher on ethnic identity tests than their counterparts (Carstens and Julia, 2000). Huh and Reid, (2000) found similar results in their study of ethnic identity in Korean adoptees. Adoptees who were high participants in Korean activities scored higher on Korean identity, than the Korean children who did not participate in Korean activities. Parents of adult intercountry transracial adoptees stressed the need for ongoing parenting classes (McIntyre, 2001). Parents from the research study by Reilly and Platz (2003), who had adopted special needs children, echoed the need for ongoing help. The authors believe that help may be needed through out the child's life cycle. Simon and Altstein (2000) found in the conclusion of their twenty year study that both the adult transracial adoptees and their families' adult birth children, believed their lives had been enriched by having transracial adoption in their families. Although most researchers expressed the need for further research, little research has addressed the category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Individual types of adoption have been studied, but the literature is lacking in information

about the special group of intercountry transracial special needs children who are now teenagers or young adults.

Summary

This chapter has dealt with the history of change in America's adoption practices. Legal and philosophical reasons behind the changes were listed. Current research, and current and controversial issues affecting today's practices were also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the subjects, sample selection, setting, and protection of human subjects. Information is presented with regard to the instrument utilized, procedures, method of data collection, and data analysis of the study.

Description of Subjects

The potential sample consisted of 23 single or married parents in Tucson, Arizona. Between the years of 1980 through 1990, these parents adopted intercountry transracial special needs children from Catholic Social Services. Fourteen sets of single or married parents, with 21 adoptees, responded. The cover letter explained the project and asked the parents to respond. It was left up to the parents to decide who would fill out the survey. All of the surveys were filled out by the mothers, with the exception of one, which was filled out by both parents. Today, the 21 adoptees are teenagers and young adults. During the ten-year period during which the children were adopted, Catholic Social Services, in association with Holt

International, placed intercountry transracial special needs children in Southern Arizona. Holt International placed 904 intercountry transracial special needs children, nationally, during that time period. The convenience sample for this current study was 2% of the national select group. Locally, the parents continued to live within the Tucson area, but may have moved from their original homes.

Sample Selection

The mailing list for the potential participants to be surveyed was provided by Catholic Social Services Adoption Agency in Tucson, Arizona. All 23 parents from the original group, who adopted from 1980 to 1990, and who were still in the Tucson area, were sent a survey. Fourteen parents, with 21 adoptees, responded, therefore the response rate was 61%. A social worker at Catholic Social Services provided the list for the parent sample and sent out the mailing. The children were adopted as infants, toddlers, and children under the age of nine.

Setting

The setting for this study was Tucson, Arizona. The United States Census (2000) states that Tucson is a city of 486,699 people. Tucson has grown by 156,163 people since the children in this study were adopted. The

city encompasses many cultures and many different languages. Spanish is a dominant language and is spoken by many children and adults. In addition, the University of Arizona has international students who also enhance the number of diverse cultures. The children from this study were adopted and grew up in this setting.

Protection of Human Subjects

The Human Subjects Committee at the University of Arizona reviewed this current research proposal for approval. Approval was secured prior to participant involvement (Summer, 2005). To insure protection of personally identifying information, participants received a cover letter, (Appendix D) and disclaimer form, with the survey, instructing them that the survey was to remain anonymous. They were asked not to put their name on the survey. The cover letter asked them if they would like to participate in the study and described the reason for the research. They were informed that the mailing was sent out by the adoption agency and that neither the agency nor the author knew whom the respondents were. It is likely that the parents already felt comfortable receiving mail from the adoption agency, because in the past, they had received regular announcements from the agency telling them about workshops, picnics, etc. A postcard was sent out

by the adoption agency, two weeks after the survey had been sent. The potential participants were thanked and reminded to return the surveys if they had not already done so. The surveys were returned to the researcher in a prepaid self-addressed envelope, again securing confidentiality.

Parent Questionnaire

The author developed the parent questionnaire with help from her doctoral committee. It was based on questions the author believed were needed to find the necessary information about intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Other questions came from the current literature, where the authors believed further research was needed in certain areas. The questionnaire was designed to determine the parents' perspectives about their children regarding the areas of demographics, ethnicity, education, occupation, language, culture, identity, and problems occurring during childhood and young adulthood. Questions were grouped into these areas in order to make it easy for the parents to respond to one area of their child's life at a time. They were also grouped into areas to help the author categorize the responses. Questions regarding the extent of each problem area, or the extent of the problem area with regard to specific aspects of intercountry adoption were listed in a Likert format. The range was from

Very High, High, Low, to Very Low.

Survey Questions 1-22 dealt with Research Question 1 & 2, Child and Parent Demographics. Survey Questions 23 – 27 dealt with Research Question 3, Success in Schooling. Survey Questions 28 – 42 dealt with Research Question 4, Parents' Perceptions of the Adoption Experience. Survey Question 43 dealt with Research Question 5, Problems Encountered Regarding Adoption Age. Survey Question 44 – 46 dealt with Research Question 4, Parents' Perceptions of the Adoption Experience. Survey Questions 47 – 49, also dealt with Research Question 3, Successes in Schooling and Employment. The last two questions, 51 and 52, were open-ended which allowed and encouraged parents to add written responses.

Research Questions

This exploratory descriptive study is designed to obtain information about intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. Its purpose is to research how this special group of teenagers and young adults has fared; and how have they progressed socially, medically, and educationally. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following Research

Questions:

1. What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the parents of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements and later at the time of this survey?
2. What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements and later at the time of this survey?
3. To what extent were successes in schooling and employment achieved?
4. What were the parents' perceptions of the adoption experience?
5. To what extent were problems encountered regarding adoption age?

Statistical Analysis

Original plans to report means, standard deviations, and Chi Square analysis were not implemented because of sample size. The findings were reported as descriptive summaries for each question. The demographics of current biographical data were compared to original biographical data.

Summary

The procedures and methodology used in this study were presented in this chapter. The subjects, sample selection, setting, and the protection of human participants were described. Information was presented with regard to the instrument utilized, procedures, method of data collection, and data analysis of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter reports the results of this research project. The population studied is briefly discussed and the findings are presented for five research questions.

Population

Fifty-one intercountry transracial special needs children, born between 1980 and 1990, were adopted through Catholic Social Services during that ten year period in Tucson, Arizona. At the time of this study, 2005, Catholic Social Services was able to identify 23 families who continued to reside in the Tucson area. Some families adopted more than one child during those ten years. Of the 23 families contacted, 14 responded to the survey, which is an approximate 61% return rate. According to Babbie (1990), 61% is considered a good response for analysis and reporting. These families adopted a total of 21 children, 11 males, and 10 females. A questionnaire (Appendix B) mailed to these families was designed to obtain parent answers to seven research questions. The parents were urged to respond and

assured of confidentiality. One survey was filled out by both parents. All of the other surveys were filled out by the mothers. The results related to the research questions are listed below.

Results

Research Question #1

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the parents of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements and later at the time of this survey? The parents demographics are listed in Tables 1 – 10. There were 14 parents who reported on each of their 21 adoptees. One of the questionnaires was completed by both the father and the mother. All of the rest were completed by the mothers.

Table 1 shows that “At Time of Placement,” 12 (85%) of the mothers were married, and had been for 5 to 10 years. “At Time of Survey,” 7 (58%) of the total were still married. The 2 mothers who were widowed, became widowed after “At Time of Placement.” The greatest number of the parents, or 50%, had been married 5 to 10 years “At Time of Placement.”

Table 1

Marital Status and Years Married

Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Parents' Marital Status (mothers answered plus one father)		
Single	2 (14.3%)	
Married	12 (85.0%)	
(All were Married or Single At Time of Placement)		
Still Married		7 (58.0%)
Divorced		2 (14.3%)
Widowed		2 (14.3%)
Remarried		1 (7.1%)
No Response		2 (14.3%)
Years Married at Placement		
Less than 5 years	2 (14.3%)	
5 – 10 years	7 (50.0%)	
Over 10 years	2 (14.3%)	
No Response	3 (21.4%)	

Table 2 indicates the parents were predominantly Caucasian; fathers (78.6%), mothers (64.3%). The majority of families (57.1%) lived with their children in ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

Table 2		
Ethnicity		
Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Father's Ethnicity		
Caucasian	11 (78.6%)	Same
No Response	3 (21.4%)	Same
Mother's Ethnicity		
Caucasian	9 (64.3%)	Same
Hispanic	1 (7.1%)	Same
Jewish (as reported)	1 (7.1%)	Same
Multi-Ethnic	1 (7.1%)	Same
No Response	2 (14.3%)	Same
Ethnically Mixed Neighborhoods		
Yes	8 (57.1%)	Same
No	6 (42.9%)	Same

Table 3 indicates the majority of parents, (n=10, 71.4%), did not have an adopted brother or sister while growing up and (n=11, 78.6%) were not adopted themselves.

Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Parents With Adopted Siblings		
Yes	4 (28.6%)	Same
No	10 (71.4%)	Same
Parents Who Were Adopted		
Yes	3 (21.4%)	Same
No	11 (78.6%)	Same

When asked if they had previous children in the home when the adoptee was placed, the majority of parents' responses, as listed in Table 4, were "Yes."

Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Previous Children In Home		
Yes	9 (64.3%)	Same
No	5 (35.7%)	Same
Ethnicities of Previous Children In Home		
Korean	2 (14.3%)	Same
Hispanic	1 (7.1%)	Same
Caucasian	4 (28.6%)	Same
Other	1 (7.1%)	Same
No Response or No Prior Children	6 (42.9%)	Same

Table 5 illustrates the responses regarding the parents' incomes. The categories for actual dollar amounts for incomes were listed in the U.S. Census Bureau of Historical Income Tables-Households, 2003, on the Internet (www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/h01.html). Parents were asked in the survey to list their incomes using these categories. According to the surveys, the majority of parents "At Time of Placement" were High-

Middle to High, (n=8, 57.1%). “At Time of Survey,” the greatest number, though no longer the majority, was still High-Middle to High (n=6, 42.9%).

Parent Incomes		
Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Parents' Income		
Low	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)
Low Middle	1 (7.1%)	4 (28.6%)
High Middle to High	8 (57.1%)	6 (42.9%)
No Response	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)

In Table 6, all but one survey was filled out by the mothers, who identified their own educations “At Time of Placement” and “At Time of Survey.” One survey was filled out by both the mother and the father and they listed both of their educations. Two other surveys were filled out by the mothers, but listed both the mothers’ and the fathers’ educations. This changed the total number of respondents from 14 to 17, since all of the mothers plus 3 of the fathers were included. All respondents had at least some college, therefore, the High School Category was omitted from this Table. “At Time of Placement,” the largest number of mothers listed Some

College (n=6, 42.9%). “At Time of Survey,” the highest number of mothers equally rated their attained education (n=4, 28.6%) as Some College, Bachelors, and Masters Degrees. For the fathers “At Time of Placement,” (n=2, 66%) had Some College, and (n=1, 33%) had a Bachelors. “At Time of Survey,” (n=2, 66%) were College Graduates, and (n=1, 33%) had a Masters.

Parents (n=17)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Level of Mothers' Educations (n=14)		
Some College	6 (42.9%)	4 (28.6%)
Bachelors	4 (28.6%)	4 (28.6%)
Masters	4 (28.6%)	4 (28.6%)
Doctorate	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.1%)
Law Degree	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.1%)
Level of Fathers' Educations (n=3)		
Some College	2 (0.66%)	
Bachelors	1 (0.33%)	2 (0.66%)
Masters		1 (0.33%)
Doctorate		
Law Degree		

In the survey (Appendix B, Survey Question # 33), thirteen mothers and one father responded to the question of whether they had made a trip to the child's birth country prior to or "At the Time of Placement" for each of their 21 children. Generally this would have been a visit to the country to pick up their child. Indicated in Table 7, none of the parents reported a trip to their child's birth country at any time during their child's or children's adoptions.

Table 7		
Trip to Birth Country		
Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>		
Parents' Trip to Birth Country		
Prior to Placement		
Yes	0 (0.0%)	
No	20 (95.2%)	
No Response	1 (4.8%)	
Family Trip to Birth Country		
Completed or in Progress		
Yes		0 (0.0%)
No		19 (90.5%)
No Response		2 (9.5%)

Another question in the survey asked parents (Appendix B-Survey Question #37) if their children were having problems, did the parents request help from their adoption agency, either “At Time of Placement,” or “At Time of Survey.” In Table 8, for both time periods, the majority of parents reported on each of their 21 children, and they reported “No.” The parents were also asked if they sought out cultural counseling for their 21 adoptees and again the majority of parents reported “No.”

Table 8		
Help for Parents		
<u>Parents (n=14)</u>	<u>At Time of Placement</u>	<u>At Time of Survey</u>
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>		
Asked Adoption Agency for Help		
Completed or in Progress		
Yes	1 (4.8%)	Same
No	12 (57.1%)	Same
No Response	8 (38.1%)	Same
Received Adoption Agency Help		
Completed or in Progress		
Yes	1 (4.8%)	Same
Not Applicable	12 (57.1%)	Same
No Response	8 (38.1%)	Same
Cultural Counseling for Child		
Completed or in Progress		
Yes	2 (9.5%)	Same
No	18 (85.7%)	Same
No Response	1 (4.8%)	Same

The questionnaire did not ask for the parents' ages "At Time Placement." Table 9 shows that both fathers' and mothers' ages were reported "At Time of Survey." The greatest number of the fathers' ages (n=6, 42.9%) were identified as in the 50-59 year category, and the majority of the mothers' ages (n=8, 57.1%) were also in the 50-59 year category.

Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Fathers' Ages	(Not asked for At Time of Placement)	
50 – 59		6 (42.9%)
60 – 69		4 (28.6%)
No Response		4 (28.6%)
Mothers' Ages	(Not asked for At Time of Placement)	
40 – 49		4 (28.6%)
50 – 59		8 (57.1%)
60 – 69		2 (14.3%)
No Response		0 (0.0%)

Another question asked of the parents was if religion was important to their family "At Time of Placement" and "At Time of Survey." As reported in Table 10, at both times, the majority (n=9, 64.3%) reported "Yes."

Table 10		
Religion		
Parents (n=14)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Religion An Important Value		
Yes	9 (64.3%)	9 (64.3%)
No	5 (35.7%)	4 (28.6%)
No Response	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.1%)

Research Question #2

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents About Their Adoptees

What were some of the personal and demographic characteristics of the intercountry transracial special needs adoptees at the time of the adoptees' placements and later at the time of this survey? These are reported in Tables 11 through 15. There were a total of 14 parents, 13 mothers, plus one father and mother combination. They reported on each of their 21 adoptees. As shown in Table 11, the majority of adoptees (n=14, 66.7%) were Under 2 years of age at time of placement.

Table 11
Adoptees' Age and Sex

Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Age When Placed		
Under 2 Years	14 (66.7%)	Same
2 Years & Over	7 (33.3%)	Same
Sex		
Male	11 (52.4%)	Same
Female	10 (47.6%)	Same

Six questions on the questionnaire asked about each adoptee's education. The parents responded that the majority of adoptees (n=12, 57.1%) had been placed in Special Education and the largest number of placements were due to the original special needs. Parents indicated that the majority (n=11, 52.4%) of their adoptees also needed rehabilitation services. All of the questions were not asked "At Time of Placement," because the majority of adoptees were babies and would not have had placements in school.

Table 12		
Adoptees' Education		
Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Special Education Placement In School (Completed or In Progress)	(Not asked At Time of Placement)	
Yes		12 (57.1%)
No		8 (38.2%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)
Special Education Placement In School Due to Original Special Needs (Completed or In Progress)	(Not asked At Time of Placement)	
Yes		8 (38.1%)
No		4 (19.0%)
No Response or Not Placed in Spec. Ed.		9 (42.9%)
Special Education Label (Completed or In Progress)	(Not asked At Time of Placement)	
Learning Disabled		7 (33.3%)
Hearing Impaired		2 (9.5%)
Other Health Impaired		1 (4.8%)
Others		2 (9.5%)
No Response or Not Placed in Spec. Ed.		9 (42.9%)

Table 12 (Continued)		
Adoptees' Education		
Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Rehabilitation Needed - Completed or In Progress	(Not asked for At Time of Placement)	
Yes		11 (52.4%)
No		9 (42.9%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)

Other questions involved parent responses to the child's birth culture and the child's sense of identity. Parents were asked if their adoptees had retained the language of their birth culture, and the parents were also asked to list the current language spoken by their children. Table 13 shows that none of the adoptees had "Retained Birth Culture Language." When asked if there was promotion of their child's birth culture, the majority (n=15, 71.4%) said "Yes." When asked how their adoptees identify themselves, an equal number (n=9, 42.9%) said American, and Dual – American and Country of Origin. Since most of the adoptees were placed as babies, the questions about Language & Culture were not asked "At Time of Placement."

Table 13		
Language and Culture		
Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Placement	At Time of Survey
Retained Birth Culture Language	(Not asked for At Time of Placement)	
Yes		0 (0.0%)
No		20 (95.2%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)
Current Language	(Not asked for At Time of Placement)	
English		18 (85.7%)
American Sign Language (ASL)		2 (9.5%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)
Birth Culture Promotion - (Completed or In Progress)	(Not Asked for At Time of Placement)	
Yes		15 (71.4%)
No		4 (19.0%)
No Response		2 (9.5%)
Wants Birth Culture - (Completed or in Progress)	(Not Asked for At Time of Placement)	
Yes		9 (42.9%)
No		11 (52.4%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)

Table 13 (Continued) Language & Culture		
Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Survey	At Time of Placement
Self Identification	(Not Asked for At Time Placement)	
American		9 (42.9%)
Country of Origin		2 (9.5%)
Dual		9 (42.9%)
No Response		1 (4.8%)

Parents were asked if their child had any adjustment problems “At Time of Placement” or when the child first arrived. Table 14 shows that parents reported “No” for the majority of adoptees (n=13, 61.9%). When asked about the extent of adjustment problems “Later,” after the “Time of Placement,” the greatest number (n=10, 47.6%) were Low and remained Low “At Time of Survey.” However, a large number of responses were High, (n=8, 38.1%) for “Later,” but as the children grew it dropped to two (n=2, 9.5%) “At Time of Survey.”

Table 14		
Adoptees' Adjustment Problems		
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>	<u>At Time of Placement</u>	<u>At Time of Survey</u>
Adjustment Problems – Completed or In Progress		(Not Asked At Time of Survey)
Yes	6 (28.6%)	
No	13 (61.9%)	
No Response	2 (9.5%)	
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>	<u>Later</u>	<u>At Time of Survey</u>
Extent of Adjustment Problems		
Low	10 (47.6%)	14 (66.7%)
High	8 (38.1%)	2 (9.5%)
Very High	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
No Response	3 (14.3%)	5 (23.8%)

In regard to their extent of comfort in American society, parents in Table 15, again rated the majority of their adoptees as High (n=20, 95.2%).

Table 15 Success in Society	
Adoptees (n=21)	At Time of Survey
Extent of Comfort In American Society	
Very Low	0 (0.0%)
Low	0 (0.0%)
High	20 (95.2%)
Very High	0 (0.0%)
No Response	1 (4.8%)

Research Question #3

To what extent were successes in schooling and employment achieved? Table 16a summarizes parents' responses regarding whether their adoptees had pursued and were successful in higher education. "At Time of Survey," parents responded that the largest number of their adoptees, (n=9, 42.9%) were Pursuing Higher Education. When asked if their adoptees participated in extracurricular activities or sports, parents responded that a great majority, (n=16, 76.2%) did. Parents also rated the extent of success in higher education on a Likert scale and again the largest group (n=8, 38.1%) had High success, however, an almost equal number were rated as Low.

Table 16a					
Success in Schooling					
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>			<u>Time of Survey</u>		
Education – Completed Or In Progress					
Pursuing Higher Education			9 (42.9%)		
Stopped After High School			5 (23.8%)		
Still in H.S.			4 (19.0%)		
No Response			3 (14.3%)		
Extra Curricular Involvement					
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>			<u>Time of Survey</u>		
(Completed or In Progress)					
Yes			16 (76.2%)		
No			4 (19.0%)		
No Response			1 (4.8%)		
<u>Extent of Success in Higher Education</u>					
Adoptees (n=21)					
<u>No Response</u>	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Very High</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
6(28.6%)	0(0.0%)	7(33.3%)	8(38.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Parents' responses are reported in the second part of Table 16b regarding their impressions of their adoptees' success in employment at "Time of Survey." Employment was classified as a full time occupation or a

part time job during school. Using a Likert type scale parents indicated a large majority of adoptees (n=18, 85.7%) had High success in employment.

Success in Employment						
Adoptees (n=21)						
No Response	None	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	NA
1(4.8%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(9.5%)	18(85.7%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Research Question #4

What were the parents' perceptions of the adoption experience?

Tables 17 through 20 show the parents' responses to this question. The majority of parents perceived that their adoption did not have problems due to the adoptee feeling of loss of identity. According to parent responses, in Table 17, the majority of adoptees who identified themselves either as American or Dual (American and Country of Origin) had a Low extent of problems due to identity.

<u>Adoptee (n=21)</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
<u>Identification</u>		
American	7 (100%)	0 (0.0%)
Country of Origin	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)
Dual	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)
No Response	5 (0.0%)	

The majority of parents also perceived there was a Low connection (n=14, 66.7%) between problem encountered and transracial differences between parents and child. Table 18 provides parents' responses to this question.

<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>				
<u>No Response</u>	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Very High</u>
6 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (66.7%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)

Parents ranked their perceptions of the extent of adoption problems due to Special Needs as High (n=9, 42.9%), although (n=6, 28.6%) of the parents also rated this as Very Low.

<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>					
<u>No Response</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>VeryHigh</u>
3 (14.3%)	2 (9.5%)	6 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	9 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 20 illustrates the results of parent perceptions of whether their adoption had problems due to their adoptee's ethnicity. A Likert type scale for the ratings of the extent of problems across all ethnicities was used. Parents rated the largest number (n=9, 42.9%) as Very Low. When the adoptees were broken down into ethnic groups, Koreans made up 13 out of 21 adoptees. The Others Category consisted of only 5 from all remaining

ethnic groups. For both the Koreans and for the Others, the rating of Very Low had the highest percentages.

<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>				
<u>All Ethnicities</u>				
No Response	None	Very Low	Low	High
3 (14.3%)	2 (9.5%)	9 (42.9%)	5 (23.8%)	2 (9.5%)
<u>Koreans (n=13)</u>				
	None	Very Low	Low	High
	2 (15.4%)	6 (46.2%)	4 (30.8%)	1 (7.7%)
<u>Others (n=5)</u>				
	None	Very Low	Low	High
	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)

Two other areas, Adoption Disruption and Adoption Dissolution, seemed to indicate a positive response from parents about their perceptions of their adoption experiences. Parents were asked in the survey, if there had been a disruption in the adoption (where they asked for the child to be removed from their home for a period of time, or the child was taken from their home for a period of time) during the child's life, up to "Time of

Survey.” Parents were also asked whether there was a dissolution in the adoption, (where they gave up the child legally, or the child was legally taken away from their home). Table 21 shows that in both cases, 20 (95.2%) parents indicated that no disruption or dissolution had happened in their child’s adoption. One parent response was missing.

Adoption Disruption or Adoption Dissolution	
<u>Adoptees (n=21)</u>	
<u>Successful Adoption</u>	<u>Time of Survey</u>
<u>Adoption Disruption</u>	
Yes	0 (0.0%)
No	20 (95.2%)
No Response	1 (4.8%)
<u>Adoption Dissolution</u>	
Yes	0 (0.0%)
No	20 (95.2%)
No Response	1 (4.8%)

Research Question #5

To what extent were problems encountered regarding adoption age? Groze (1986) in a review of 91 adoption cases found that a child’s age was the best single indicator of disruption; however, in this current study 3

children, from the seven who were adopted after the age of 2, were reported as not having problems due to “Age at Placement.” This is almost equal in number to the 4 children who were rated as having problems due to “Age at Placement.” “Age at Placement,” may be a cause of later problems and possibly a negative indicator, however none of the 21 adoptions in this study, including those children adopted after the age of two, were disrupted nor dissolved.

Only 4 parents’ perceptions show “Age at Placement” as a possible negative indicator. Table 22 illustrates that parents rated on a Likert type scale their perceptions of whether problems encountered by their adoptees were due to “Age at Placement.” For the largest number of adoptees (n=9, 42.9%) parents rated “Age at Placement” as Very Low. These parents did not believe the age of their child at time of placement was a cause for their adoptee’s later problems. However, from the set of 7 parents who adopted their children after the age of 2, 4 rated “Age at Placement,” as High or Very High. For 3 adoptees “Age at Placement,” was rated as High (n=3, 14.3%) These parents believed that “Age at Placement,” was a high factor for their adoptees’ later problems. For another one adoptee, parents rated “Age at Placement,” as Very High (n=1, 4.8%). Again, the parents of this adoptee,

believed that problems encountered by their child were due to “Age at Placement.” The parents were then asked to list the age of their adoptee when the child was placed. The four adoptees’ ages listed in the High and Very High categories were placed in their adoptive homes after the age of two. Yet none of the adoptions in this study had disrupted nor dissolved.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Very Low</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Very High</u>
2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	9 (42.9%)	4 (19.0%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (4.8%)

Two questions in the survey, 51 and 52, were open-ended and encouraged parents to add written responses. Survey question 51 was, “What do you see as the most endearing aspect of this child?” Parents answered for 20 out of 21 adoptees. Of the twenty responses given, the majority of answers were “loving and lovable.” This answer was noted 12 times out of 20, or 60% of the time. Other answers varied from “kind, sweet, or hard worker.” According to Barbee (1990) open-ended questions

can be coded as generally supportive or opposed. There was only one negative response of, “no idea.” Therefore, 19 responses were supportive. Survey Question 52 asked parents to, “Please add any information you think would be beneficial or any information you would like to share to help current parents of young adoptees.” Nine questions were left blank. Each of the others was completely individual. These ranged from, “A Child is a child,” to “Don’t try to do it alone,” to “Find out as much information as you can.”

Summary

Chapter 4 reported on the results of this research study. There was a brief discussion on the target population and how the parents were then identified and contacted. The survey results were then presented for the five research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the development and implementation of the study. The results are examined in light of the initial research questions and previous literature. The significance and generality of the results are explored and discussed. Recommendations are suggested for further research.

Summary of The Study

The purpose of this study was to gain information about parents' perspectives of their teenage and young adult adoptees. The adoptees comprise a special category of intercountry transracial special needs. Previous research has centered on the separate categories of intercountry, transracial, or special needs, but very little is in the literature regarding adoptees who comprise all three descriptors of the one category of intercountry transracial special needs.

Fifty-one intercountry transracial special needs children, born between 1980 and 1990, were adopted during that ten year period, through Catholic Social Services in Tucson, Arizona. All foreign-born children, adopted

through Catholic Social Services at that time, had special needs. The special needs category is comprised of older, bi-racial, siblings who have to be placed together, or children who have mental, physical, or emotional problems. In 2005, Catholic Social Services was able to identify 23 families who had adopted from this category and who had remained in the Tucson area. These 23 families were mailed a survey and 14 responded. This is an approximate 61% return rate. According to Babbie (1990), 61% is a good response for analysis and reporting. The 23 families who responded, adopted 11 males and 10 females.

The parent responses from the surveys addressed five research questions. One survey was answered by both parents, but the rest of the surveys were answered only by the mothers. All of the fathers and the majority of the mothers were Caucasian. Religion was an important value and all of the parents had been educated beyond high school. The age range of parents was 50 to 69 years "At Time of Survey." Most parents had other children in their homes when their adoptee was first placed in their home, and a few of those children had been adopted. Therefore, most of the parents in this study had had parenting experience, either with a biological or an adopted child, when their adoptee was placed.

Income for the majority of parents in this study, was in the High-Middle to High Category at “Time of Placement.” None of the families had made a trip to the child’s birth country either before or after the placement, and only a few reported having cultural counseling for their adoptee. Most reported promoting the adoptee’s birth culture through dance lessons, books, costumes, and picnics with other adoptees. Parents reported that none of the children had retained the language of their birth country. The majority of the children identified themselves either as Americans, or dually as Americans and as members of their country of birth (ex. American/Korean, or Korean/American).

A high percentage of adoptees, according to parents, had no adjustment problems or problems related to race or ethnic background. In school, the majority of adoptees were placed in Special Education, and over 1/3 of those adoptees were placed due to their original special need at the “Time of Placement.” The majority also needed rehabilitation services for physical problems. Of those placed in Special Education, the greatest numbers were placed in Learning Disabled Programs, followed by two students in Hearing Impaired Programs. By far the majority was involved in numerous extra curricular activities.

The majority of parents perceived that their adoptees did not have problem areas due to a feeling of loss of identity. Adoptees were generally successful in completing education and in obtaining successful employment. Children adopted after 2 years of age seemed to have a higher risk for problem areas. Parents rated the largest group of adoptees as having “High” problem areas related to their adoptee’s special needs.

At “Time of Survey,” none of the adoptees had a disruption in their adoption (i.e., where parents asked for the child to be removed from their home for a period of time, or the child was taken from the home for a period of time). The same was true for dissolution of adoption. None of the adoptees had a dissolution in their adoption (i.e., where the child was given up legally by the parents, or the child was legally taken from the home).

Discussion

This study was initiated to explore how teenagers and young adults from the category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees have fared. The parents’ perspective was used to obtain information about their children. In the course of the study, information was obtained and many questions remain.

Certain demographics stand out. All of the fathers and the majority of the mothers are Caucasian. This finding is similar to that of Tessler, Gamache, and Liu (1999) in their 1996 study of Chinese adoptees. Ninety-six percent of the 526 parents in their study were Caucasian. Likewise, in McIntyre's (2001) study of eight families, all of the parents were Caucasian. The large percentage of Caucasian parents, in this study and McIntyre's, may be due to the shortage in the 1970s and 1980s of children who were available for white middle-class families to adopt. The National Association of Black Social Workers had protested against white families adopting black children, stating the loss for the children of their culture and identity. State adoption agencies had refused to place children across racial lines. This changed with the legislation signed by President Clinton in 1996 (P.L. 104-542), which outlawed adoption only along racial lines. The legislation was designed to help numerous minority children who lingered in the Foster Care System. However, many of these children were older, and numerous white couples who wanted babies, turned to third world countries.

In this current study, the majority of Caucasian parents who adopted were financially in the High-Middle to High class, when their children were placed with them. At "Time of Survey," the largest number was still in the

High-Middle to High, but two had dropped into the Low Middle. This may be due to two respondents who are now widowed, or two who are now divorced. Tessler et al. (1999) found in 1995, their participant parents' median income was \$70,000, with 21% over \$130,000. According to U.S. Census Bureau records for 1995, their parents would also fall into High-Middle and High income levels. These levels may be more common since foreign adoption, from the 1980s up to the current time, has not been inexpensive. However, there are parents below these income levels, who have received help from financial donors, and other parents who have borrowed to meet the fees and related costs of adoption.

This author's study with intercountry transracial special needs adoption is not comparable in parent income to that found for only special needs adoptees in the United States, such as Groze's (1996) longitudinal study. Often within the United States, parents of special needs children have either subsidized adoptions or some kind of financial safety net. With foreign adoptions this is not the case.

Parents in this 1980 to 1990 study had not made a trip to their child's birth country during anytime of their adoptee's life, nor had they sought a cultural counselor for their child. However, Carstens and Julia's (2000)

study of 37 families who had adopted children from abroad, showed a significant association between having a cultural counselor after visiting the child's birth country. These participant parents stressed the importance of a cultural counselor after seeing and living for a week in their child's birth country. These parents were judged to be ethnoracially aware. Carstens and Julia stress whenever possible private agencies should encourage parents to take a trip to the birth country of their adoptee. This was not the case in the 1980s. Neither the birth country government nor the American adoption agency realized the importance of the parents' visit.

Today, people are aware of the need for children to have a strong link to their past. Knowing about their original culture helps the adoptees with the development of their own personal positive identity. The largest number of parents responded that they promoted their child's birth culture, but "At Time of Survey," they believed the greatest number of their adoptees no longer wanted this promotion. This may be because the children had grown up with their parents making them very aware of their birth culture and the adoptees now no longer felt a need for it. McIntyre (2001) also found her parent participants were considered culturally competent by social workers and adoption professionals.

In the current study, the majority of parents raised their children in ethnically mixed neighborhoods, yet a large number did not. McIntyre found that white parents who lived in white neighborhoods had difficulty finding racial and cultural peers for their children. Rojewski and Rojewski (2001) in their study of children from China, found that nearly 2/3 of the Chinese adoptees' families lived in white neighborhoods. The authors questioned how these children would fare, particularly in their teens, without the interaction of other Chinese children and Chinese mentors. The results from the literature seem to stress the need for parents to realize their interracial adopted children need peers and role models from their own ethnic background.

Parents of teenagers and young adults in this study are older than most parents of biological children of the same age. Most parents fell into the 50-59 year category "At Time of Study." This finding is the same for McIntyre whose study centered on intercountry transracial young adults. The parents in her study were also 50 to 60 years of age. Similar results again occurred with Tessler et al. (1999), who found their participant parents, who had more current placements, were older than the typical first time biological parents. This may also be due to certain agencies and certain countries, which accept

older parents. China, for example, accepts parents up to 55 years of age for a preschooler. Certain cultures respect age, and this may be a very positive result for older adults interested in adopting intercountry children.

Parents are well educated in the current study, with all having at least some college. The same is true for McIntyre (2001) and Tessler et al. (1999). This may be another reason that parents are somewhat older in these studies. Many seem to have finished school and are more settled in their careers than are many young parents of biological children. However, in this study, the majority of parents already had children in their homes. Some had biological children, some had previously adopted children, and some had a combination of the two. Tessler et al. found similar results with households of two to eight members; some having other adopted children from China, and some having biological children. This is a positive result for middle-aged parents thinking of increasing the size of their families.

In school, the majority of adoptees in this study were placed in Special Education, and according to their parents, over 1/3 of those were placed due to their originally identified special need. The majority also needed Rehabilitation Services. Parents indicated special needs as the highest source of problems encountered by their adoptees. McIntyre (2001)

relates that parents who had adopted special needs children, described special needs as adding another complex layer to their environment. Special needs, especially physical and emotional ones, are not usually something the child can outgrow or escape from. In the current study, special needs, was defined as mental, physical, or emotional problems. Children who are older, biracial, or who need to be adopted in a large sibling group are also in the special needs category for adoption. Implications are that these are the children who generally wait to be adopted. Results from this study and McIntyre's (2001) show that parents considering a special needs child must realize that a special need may be something that remains with the child for life. However, the studies generally did show that these children have productive lives and share a loving bond between their parents and themselves.

The greatest number of adoptees were currently pursuing Higher Education, but some adoptees were still attending High School, and some were not pursuing Higher Education. A large majority of these young people participated in many Extra Curricular Activities, either within or outside of the school system. Since all of these children had special needs, this seemed to be a very positive response by those who had physical,

mental, or emotional disabilities. Only one set of parents had 2 children who were a biological group. All of the other children had physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Survey results indicate that these adoptees are generally children who are very wanted, and that most parents did all that they could to help their special needs children participate in life as much as possible.

The majority of parents in this study did not believe their adoptees had adjustment problems “At Time of Placement.” When asked the extent of adjustment problems after the initial placement, or “Later,” and again “At Time of Survey,” the greatest number rated adjustment problems as Low for both. However, a number did rate their adoptees as having “High” adjustment problems “Later.” This number dropped drastically “At Time of Survey.” This seems to indicate that although the children may have experienced adjustment problems, with help they were able to control or overcome them. This would be something for future parents to realize and prepare for.

Other positive responses were indicated when parents stated that the majority of their teenage or young adult adoptees feel comfortable in American Society. This finding is similar to that of Simon and Altstein’s

(2002) 20-year longitudinal study of transracial families with adoptees and birth children. The authors found that transracial adoptees, “clearly were aware and comfortable with their racial identity” (p. 222). They also found, “during adolescent years, the scores on the self-esteem and family integration scales had shown no difference between the transracial adoptees and the birth children”(p. 222). The literature seems to show that most of these children are comfortable in their families and in American Society. Park (1994) stated that these children are often not welcomed into their birth society once they are of age. Many of these children therefore, would probably not have had the same positive results if they had remained in orphanages in their native country.

Success in employment can be another aspect that shows Comfort in American society. These foreign adoptees felt comfortable enough in this country to do well on jobs. Over 85% of the parents felt their adoptees had “High” success in employment.

When their children experienced problems, the majority of parents felt there was a “Low” or “Very Low” connection regarding ethnicity and the problem area. A large majority also rated the connection between adoptee problems and transracial differences between parent and child as “Low.”

Parents of the majority of adoptees indicated loss of identity as a “Low” source for their children’s problems. This seems to indicate that the transracial difference between parents and child are no longer as outstanding as they once were in our society. We now have numerous kinds of families; single parent, blended, transracial, gay, etc.

In this study, none of the parents reported a disruption in the adoption, where the parents asked for the child to be removed from their home for a period of time, or the child was taken from their home for a period of time. There were identical results for adoption dissolution. None of the adoptees were legally given up by the parents, or legally taken away from their homes. This seemed quite remarkable since the parents in this study rated special needs as causing the greatest problems for their adoptees. Since the 2000 census did not address disruption or dissolution, older sources are cited here. Groza and Rosenberg (1981) state that 98% of all adoptions are not dissolved after the adoption is legal. However, Groze (1986) found that in special needs adoption of any age, 14.3% dissolved. Older children had a greater chance of disruption. The children in this study are intercountry, transracial, and special needs. As Groze (1996) states, “little is known about the life of older and special needs adoptees as they reach adulthood,”

(p. 140). According to parents from this study, their adoptees are doing quite well. Many of the children in this study came out of poverty and some had suffered neglect in hospitals and orphanages. Yet these adoptions appeared to be quite successful.

Parents again reiterated the success of their adoptions when they were asked, “What do you see as the most endearing aspect of this child?” The majority, 60 %, answered “loving and lovable.” There was only one negative response regarding the 21 adoptees. This seems quite remarkable considering the effects poverty and neglect can have on a child. The second open-ended question asked parents to, “Please add any information you think would be beneficial or any information you would like to share to help current parents of young adoptees.” Thirteen answers were given and each one was an individual. These ranged from, “A child is a child,” to “Don’t try to do it alone,” to “Find out as much information as you can.” It seems that parents were again showing the success of their adoptions, by trying to inform and help others who are interested, in having successful adoptions too.

Recommendations

Based upon the results and limitations of this study, further research is needed in this special category of intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. It would be enlightening, in a future identical study, to ask the same set of 52 questions to the adoptees of the parents who responded to this current survey. The current study was an exploratory study of 14 families in Tucson, Arizona. A national sample, however, would give on a larger scale, needed information to those considering adopting intercountry transracial special needs adoptees. It would also give needed information to those who already have young adoptees from this special category. If a follow-up study of the adoptees from this study is done in the future, I would recommend using the same research design, in order to ensure confidentiality, and to ensure results that are comparable to those of the parents. In this study there was only one family that adopted a sibling group. Possibly in a related study, sibling groups, and biracial children could be examined separately from children with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities, unless these children also have disabilities. Often children adopted when they are older also have other disabilities.

Summary

This study has shown that life with an intercountry transracial special needs adoptee is not without problems. However, from this study, and the studies of Simon and Altstein (2002), and McIntyre (2001), it appears that for the majority of parents, adopting an intercountry transracial special needs child can be a positive and fulfilling life experience.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS

Please answer the following fifty-two questions. The survey, which was developed by me, with help from my doctoral committee, was sent out by Catholic Social Services. Having Catholic Social Services send out the survey assures your confidentiality. Many questions can be answered with a check mark for a Yes___ No___ or a Male_____ Female_____. Your answers will be tabulated and trends will be sought. Please return the survey in the attached self addressed stamped envelope. Please do not add your name to the survey or to the return envelope. Your individual results will remain anonymous. Please add any comments you feel would be helpful. The results from the study will help current adoptive parents with needed information from your experiences. It will also help possible future adoptive parents make wise decisions concerning adoption of intercountry transracial special needs children.

Thank you so much for your help!

APPENDIX B
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

General Questions

1. What was the age of your child at the time he/she was placed in your home? _____
2. What is your child's gender? _____Male
_____Female
3. What is the name or names of your child's special needs classification(s)? (e.g. – hearing impaired, visually impaired, physically impaired, failure to thrive, sibling group, etc.)

4. Did any of your previously adopted children have special needs? Yes _____ No _____ Not Applicable _____

Ethnicity

5. What is the ethnicity of your child? Korean_____ Hispanic_____ African American_____ Chinese_____ Vietnamese _____ Indian_____ Other_____
6. What was the number of children in your home at the time your child was placed? _____
7. What were their ethnicities? _____
8. What is your ethnicity? father _____ mother _____
9. Did you live in an ethnically mixed neighborhood while your child was being raised? Yes _____ No _____

Parents

10. Who is filling out the survey? mother _____ father _____
11. What was your age at the time your child was placed in your home? father _____ mother _____

12. What is your age now? Father_____ Mother_____
13. Was religion an important value in your family at the time of your child's placement? Yes_____
- No _____
- What religion did you practice?_____
14. Is religion an important value in your family now? Yes_____No_____
- What religion do you practice now?
- _____
15. Were you married or single at the time the child was placed in your home? married _____ single_____ If married, how many years were you married when you adopted?_____
16. If you were married at the time your child was placed in your home: have you remained married ? _____ or have you divorced, _____widowed,_____ remarried _____
17. What was your level of education at the time your child was placed in your home? _____
- Number of high school years _____
- High school graduate _____

Number of College years _____

College graduate _____

Masters Degree _____

Doctoral Degree _____

18. What is your current level of education? _____

Number of high school years _____

High school graduate _____

Number of college years _____

College graduate _____

Masters Degree _____

Doctoral Degree _____

19. Were there any adopted children in your parents' family?

(e.g. your brothers or sisters) Yes _____

No _____

Were you adopted? Yes _____ No _____

20. What was your original reason for wanting to adopt an intercountry
transracial special needs
child? _____

21. What was your level of income at the time you adopted your child?

\$1 to \$7,556 _____,

\$7,557 to \$14,100 _____,

\$14,101 to \$21,610 _____,

\$21,611 to \$31,700 _____,

\$31,701 and above _____

22. What is your current level of income?

\$1 to \$17,970 _____

\$17,971 to \$33,314 _____

\$33,315 to \$53,000 _____

\$53,001 to \$83,499 _____

\$83,500 and above _____

Child's Education

23. What is your child's current level of schooling? (e.g. 9th, 10th, 11th grade, college etc.)_____
24. Was your child placed in special education? Yes_____ No_____
25. If so, was the special education placement due to the special needs classification known at the time of adoption?
Yes_____No_____ Please state the label of the special education placement_____.
26. Did your child need any rehabilitation services?
Yes_____ No_____ If so, what kind?

27. Did your child participate in any type of extra curricular activity or sport? Yes_____No_____
If so, please name
them_____
- _____

Child's Language, Culture, and Identity

28. What is the language now spoken by your child?

29. Did your child retain or learn the language of his/her birth country?
Yes _____ No _____
30. Identity - how does your child identify himself/herself? (e.g.
American, Korean, Korean American)

31. Have you tried activities to promote your child's culture?
(e.g. picnics with other adoptees, classes teaching
dancing, cooking etc. from their birth country . Yes
_____ No _____ If so, what kind?

32. Does your child want to know about his/her birth culture? Yes _____
No _____

33. Did you take a trip to your child's birth country prior to adoption?
Yes_____ No_____ After adoption? Yes _____
No_____
34. Did you have a cultural consultant, someone from your child's ethnic background who helped you and the child learn about his/her birth culture?
Yes _____ No_____

Child's Problems

35. Did your child have any adjustment problems when he/she first arrived? (e.g. constant crying, bad dreams) Yes_____
No_____
36. How did you solve
them?_____
- _____
37. Did you ask your adoption agency for help?
Yes_____ No_____ Did they help?

Yes_____No_____Comments_____

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT RESPONSE

Very High (VH), High (H), Low (L), and Very Low (VL)

38. To what extent did your child later have any problem areas? (e.g. school, drugs, runaway) Please circle VH, H, L, VL Please list areas.

39. To what extent does your child have any problem areas now? (e.g. school, drugs, runaway) Please circle: VH, H, L, VL

40. Please identify the most severe problem area.

41. To what extent was the severe problem area thought to be related to intercountry adoption? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL
42. To what extent was the severe problem area thought to be related to special needs? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL
43. To what extent was the severe problem area thought to be related to his/her age when adopted? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL What was his/her age when placed in your home?_____
44. To what extent was the severe problem area thought to be related to ethnicity? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL
45. Was there a disruption in the adoption – was your child taken or given away from the home? Yes _____ No _____
Why? _____

46. Was there a dissolution of the adoption; was the child taken or given permanently away from the home?
Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

Young Adult

FOR QUESTION 47-49 PLEASE CIRCLE THE

CORRECT RESPONSE Very High (VH), High (H),

Low (L), Very (VL)

Or Not Applicable (NA)

47. If your child is now a young adult in his/her late teens or early twenties, to what extent does he/she seem to be doing well in higher education? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL, Or Not Applicable _____

Why? _____

48. If your child is now a young adult in his/her late teens or early twenties, to what extent does he/she seem to be doing well in

employment? Please Circle VH, H, L, VL Or Not applicable

Why?_____

49. To what extent has your teenager or young adult contributed to society? Please Circle, VH, H, L, VL

Explain_____

50. To what extent does your young adult seem comfortable in American society? Please Circle, VH, H, L, VL

Explain_____

51. What do you see as the most endearing aspect of this child?_____

52. Please add any information you think would be beneficial or any information you would like to share to help current parents of young adoptees. Also add any information you believe might help future

parents make wise decisions about adopting intercountry transracial
special needs children.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR
HELP!**

APPENDIX C
INTRODUCTORY LETTER

August 4, 2005

To International Adoptive Families

Dear Adoptive Parent;

Some years ago you adopted one or more children internationally with the help of Catholic Social Service. We hope that this has been a positive experience for you.

Recently one of your fellow adoptive parents, whose daughter was adopted internationally, requested our help in contacting adoptive families in order to request their participation in research designed to increase our knowledge about internationally, interracial adopted children's adjustment.

Enclosed you will find the questionnaire, along with a return envelope. Your participation is, of course, voluntary. Your names and other identifying information have not been shared with the researcher or any other entity.

Your time in completing this questionnaire will help to expand knowledge in the area of international adoption and could lead to improvements in professional practice in the area.

If you would like to know the results of the research you may request a copy by contacting our office.

Respectfully,

Lexann Downey-Lewis, MSW, LCSW
Program Director, Infant Adoption Services

APPENDIX D
AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTORY LETTER

September, 2005.

Dear Parent(s),

Catholic Social Services has sent out this survey for me. I do not know who you are and the survey is totally voluntary and confidential. I am Kathleen Brumble, the mother of a 21 year old intercountry transracial special needs adoptee, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona. Very little research has been done on our children, and I am very interested in finding out how our teenagers and young adults have fared. There is ample research on the groups of intercountry children, transracial children, and special needs children. However there is very little on the teenagers and young adults who are a combination of all three groups. I am hoping this survey will help parents of current and future intercountry transracial special needs children. There is a lot to learn from your experiences!

Will you please fill out the attached survey? It should take approximately 15 minutes and it contains 52 questions. The results will be tabulated and trends will be sought. Please do not put your name anywhere on the survey or the return envelope for confidentiality reasons. When you finish the survey please return it in the attached postage paid envelope. If you have any questions you may call me at 326-7422 without identifying yourself. The results will be published and copies will be available at Catholic Social Services.

If you are unsure of an answer or do not want to answer a question, please skip it and move on to the next one. This is totally voluntary and you will not receive any compensation.

Thank you so much for your time. I think we will learn a lot and have a lot to offer current and future parents of our special group of young people.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Brumble

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