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**RE-ENTRY ADJUSTMENT OF
HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE STUDENTS
TO NEW ZEALAND.**

**Cross-cultural transition
within a loss and grief framework.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

While it is generally assumed re-entry into a person's own culture after life abroad can be problematic, little attention has been given in the theory or research to the re-entry life of sojourners, and even less to adolescent sojourners. The aim of the present study was to examine a new conceptual framework for the readjustment process using existing loss and grief models. This study examined nine variables associated with the grieving process (Despair, Anger/Hostility, Guilt, Social Isolation, Loss of Control, Rumination, Depersonalization, Death Anxiety and Somatization) and applied them to the cross-cultural transition of American Field Service (AFS) high school exchange students back into New Zealand after one year abroad. 207 sojourners responded to mail-in questionnaires measuring grief (Grief Experience Inventory; GEI) and psychological adjustment (the short form of the Profile of Mood States; POMS-SF). Their responses on the POMS-SF were compared to that of a home based control of high school students while responses on the GEI were compared with three reference groups and a control group from the GEI manual. Results suggest sojourners are more similar to people grieving after a death than people experiencing loss by divorce. While sojourners were typically satisfied with their exchange, 61% noted re-entry was problematic. Further support for the results came from the unsolicited qualitative information participants provided. The theoretical basis of the present study proved useful and it is suggested that future research could develop this methodology further.

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Introduction

The last several years have led to the development of an interest for the researcher in the re-entry experience of adolescents. This has been primarily due to observations and discussions with high school students who were in the process of re-acculturation back into New Zealand life after having spent one year abroad, or friends and families of exchange students. Upon hearing of my topic lots of people "knew someone who had difficulties in coming home". The anecdotal evidence each individual provided during these discussions showed that they experienced real difficulty in finding their places in their New Zealand family and old lives again. Many described a sense of confusion, loss, frustration and unhappiness upon their return. Often they emphasised a belief that they had changed and developed as a person and they now felt they could no longer relate to their previous life. Additionally, most sojourners felt that they spent large amounts of their time thinking about the life that they had in the host country and felt dissatisfied with what they perceived to be a lack of interest from others in the detail of their experiences. This all culminated them feeling displaced in both the host culture and their home culture. Most of the students were making plans to return to the host culture within a year of being back.

These similar psychological difficulties prompted a deeper interest in the area of cross-cultural transition for the researcher and the impetus for the present study. It has led to the formulation of the concept that re-entry can be difficult for those experiencing it and that it can have a profound psychological impact. These difficulties the adolescents described had similarities with the conceptual framework of psychological loss and grief theory.

The present study seeks to use these existing theories to explain the phenomenon described by the sojourners and to a preliminary investigation of whether or not these theories can be applied for the concept of re-entry. This study is further unique, in that its focus is on American Field Service Exchange students (AFS) who are adolescent sojourners, a particular age group and special type of sojourner who have not received much attention in the literature.

Sojourner Adjustment

Introduction

Re-entry, the readjustment of a sojourner to their home culture is a contemporary concept in the study of cross-cultural transitions. The present study is exploratory, in that it seeks to provide a conceptual framework for the study of the cross-cultural re-entry transition. It posits that psychological adjustment after re-entry into a person's home culture can be problematic. The researcher's initial observation of this was based on anecdotal evidence.

Previous research in the area on re-entry has been limited by (a) a lack of control groups, (b) an absence of standardised psychometric measures and (c) a focus on descriptions of difficulties rather than an explanation of the process of re-acculturation. This study applied for the first time to the researcher's knowledge the theoretical framework of grieving to explain the homecoming changes occurring within individuals.

Definition - Sojourner Adjustment

Previously, the psychological adjustment of people who temporarily settled in another culture and country has become known in the literature as "*sojourner adjustment*" (Church, 1982). In a broader sense this term encompasses culture shock/stress, emotional well being, attitudinal, academic/professional, social adjustment and outcomes in the host culture. More recently, sojourner adjustment has been extended to look at the difficulties faced when re-entering the sojourners home culture. Therefore sojourner adjustment is two-fold, it looks at (a) adjusting after moving to the new/host country and (b) adjusting back after coming home.

Attempts at operationalising sojourner adjustment, have been made by measuring varying combinations of the above variables. Bochner (1972) in studying undergraduate foreign students in Australia, asserts that students need to adjust to 4 different roles: as a foreigner with special cultural learning difficulties, as a student adjusting to stress common to all undergraduate students, as a developmental adjustment concerning meaning and maturing, and as a representative of their home culture.

In a clinical psychological framework poor adjustment can be defined by diagnosis from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). This does not appear to have been done in any of the literature the present researcher reviewed. The DSM-IV provides classifications for common clusters of behaviours and emotions. The DSM-IV has two classifications most likely to be used to explain sojourner adjustment difficulties; the adjustment disorders and acculturation problem.

Adjustment Disorders

The DSM-IV criteria for Adjustment Disorder are the manifestation of clinically significant emotional or behavioural symptoms within 3 months of the onset of an identifiable stressor. It further states that such a diagnosis can be made in the presence of a stressor involving specific developmental phases. Clinically significant symptoms can be a significant impairment in social or academic functioning, or, marked distress in excess of what would be expected given the nature of the stressor. Adjustment Disorders can be then further classified by sub-types. With this definition of sojourner adjustment difficulties the return home can be perceived as being an identifiable stressor, any psychological symptoms then resulting allow for this diagnosis.

Acculturation Problem

This is a DSM-IV, V category (other life stressors that may be a focus of clinical attention) for when the primary problem a person has, is the adjustment to a different culture. Additionally, these difficulties should not fall within significant levels to warrant another diagnosis. Kaplan, Saddock and Grebb (1994) state that it is often characterised by feelings of depersonalisation, derealisation, anxiety, depression and a sense of isolation. These are feelings reported after re-entry. Although returning home at face value may not seem like another new culture, it can be argued that the home culture is a different culture to the one they have lived in for one year. Sojourners need to re-acculturate back into their old lives.

A lengthy clinical assessment interview is required to make either of these diagnoses and this is beyond the scope of the present study. However, it is useful to conceptualise sojourner adjustment difficulties in this way and may have potential as a means of operationalising sojourner adjustment in future studies.

Limitations of the Previous research

Previous research attempts to explore the sojourner adjustment construct have tended to concentrate on those sojourners adjusting to living in the new culture and country rather than returnees adjusting to returning home. Usually the samples of sojourners have been inclined to be international students located in the United States (Brabant, Palmer & Gramling, 1990; Sandhu, 1994; Kaczmarek, Matlock, Merta, Ames, 1994; Brinson & Kottler, 1995; Barrat & Huba, 1994). Several writers have been critical of the lack of empirical study on re-entry to a sojourner's home country (eg: Rogers & Ward, 1993; Ward & Kennedy, 1993b).

It is generally assumed that re-entry can be problematic and unsettling, however little research has focused on the specific re-entry of sojourners and the adjustment needed to "fit in" again, to their own culture and country. Carsello and Creaser (1976) identified one re-entry problem for returning students is a decline in physical health. Almost 25% of their sample reported a deterioration in their health in their time abroad, and that some students experienced impaired concentration and study upon return. Adler (1981), in a study of 200 corporate employees, reports returning home to be more difficult than moving to a foreign culture. Most research has indicated that re-entry is problematic (Carsello et al., 1976; Westwood, Lawrence, Paul, 1986; Sussman, 1986; Wilson, 1993; Uehara, 1986; Moore, Jones & Austin, 1987; Raschio, 1987; Werkman, 1979; Adler, 1981), while Martin (1986) did not. The Martin anomaly was probably a result of the fact that she measured relationship perceptions and sojourners believed parental and sibling relationships to be better, however identified relationships with friends as being both positively and negatively effected.

The research that has examined more specific experiences of sojourner students re-entry difficulties, has explored

- the relationships between expectations and actual experiences (Rogers & Ward, 1993; Rohrllich & Martin, 1991),
- problems with family members and friends (Brabant et al., 1990),
- short-term positive and negative influences from travelling (Carsello & Creaser, 1976; Martin, 1986),
- the effect of maintaining communication with the home country and keeping up to date with events there (Austin, 1986; Corey, 1986),
- strategies to reduce culture stress prior to returning home (Westwood, Lawrence & Paul, 1986),
- distinguishing between psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993a), and
- sojourner perceptions of re-entry difficulties (Raschio, 1987).
- trends in the literature suggest that females experience greater re-entry difficulties than males (Brabant, et al., 1990).

Sojourner Adjustment Models

The four categories of models commonly used to explain adaptation of sojourners in a foreign country have provided the basis for conceptual approaches to sojourner re-adjustment after re-entry to the home country. The four categories of models have been adapted and extended in an attempt to explain re-entry difficulties. There are undoubtedly similarities between adjustment in the host culture and re-acculturation in the home culture, however there are unique variables to the re-entry transition (Martin, 1984). Background, change, awareness of change (Martin, 1984), host culture variables and expectations (Rogers et al., 1993) are unique to re-entry and as such separate re-entry from the host culture acculturation process. An obvious illustration of this is the parallel reality that adolescents grow and have new experiences while they are away and return after their new experiences abroad to find life at home has also changed and progressed. However, the sojourner may expect to find things as they had left them.

Church (1982) in a review article discusses sojourner adjustment in terms of (a) stage theories, (b) curves of adjustment, (c) coping styles and (d) culture learning. Martin

(1984) expanded on these 4 conceptual approaches by including a fifth approach known as the (e) intercultural communication approach;

(a) Stage theories. Culture shock (Oberg, 1960; Adler, 1975) is a sustained state of anxiety that results from losing familiar orienting cues. The culture shock concept provides a description and explanation of sojourner distress, but does not address the process issues of re-entry (Ward et al., 1993b).

(b) Curves of adjustment. The U-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) and the W-curve (Lysgaard, 1955). The U curve posits that adjustment is a function of time in the new culture, and the W-curve incorporates a second U curve upon re-entry, that is, that once returning home adjustment is a function of the length of time home. However, Church (1982) in a review of these models states "...support for the U curves has been weak, inconclusive and overgeneralised ..." (p 542). The major flaw in both of these models is that neither seek to explain why adjustment is necessary or how it occurs, instead these models describe patterns of adjustment.

(c) Coping styles. A more recent attempt at conceptualising adjustment has been to use operant learning principles. Adjustment is conceived as managing the new reinforcers, new discriminative and aversive stimuli, and changes in response-reinforcement contingencies (Bochner, 1972). Difficulties with this concept also relate to re-entry. Theoretically, sojourners should embrace the familiar reinforcers, stimuli and have no difficulty coming home.

(d) Culture learning. Other researchers have attempted to explain patterns of adjustment in the host culture by investigating more personality type characteristics (Church, 1982). This constitutes a continuum from sojourners who remain detached observers of the host culture, to those sojourners who adjust, and at the other end, enthusiastic sojourners' who participate so fully in the host culture that they may relinquish their own culture. These studies are narrow in focus and limited by ignoring a number of potential stressors and not controlling for developmental issues in home samples with similar personality characteristics. Further, they have not been extended to look at re-entry difficulties.

(e) Intercultural communication. This concept defines re-entry as a "communication re-entry". This is the understanding and interpreting of changes within relationships that one communicates with, that can cause re-acculturation difficulties.

Ward and colleagues have not followed these five conceptual models. Instead have they have asserted that adjustment can be broadly divided into two categories; (a) psychological (feelings of well-being and satisfaction) and (b) socio-cultural (the ability to negotiate interactive aspects of the host culture) (Ward & Kennedy, 1993b) following a stress and coping theoretical base. Their research has demonstrated that psychological adjustment is affected by life changes, social support and personality factors.

Methodological Issues in Research Design with Sojourners.

Criticism in the literature of sojourner adjustment has been directed at the methodology employed in studies, and the use of concepts and theory formulated in the 1950's and 1960's. Critics like Hegazy (1969; cited in Church, 1982) have argued that identification of adjustment difficulties and outcomes rather than the process dynamics have limited the literature and Church (1982), that the development of new theories has been inhibited by the frequent emphasis on previous models. Walton (1971; cited in Church, 1982) has suggested that future research directions should seek to apply currently existing literature to the dynamics of sojourner adjustment. The present study sought to use an existing grieving theory to allow generation and tests of predictive hypotheses.

Further, there is a need to assess for previous cross cultural experience as some researchers have determined that previous transitions experiences can facilitate better adjustments (Brabant et al., 1990; Ward et al., 1993b) by having developed acculturation strategies. Despite this finding few studies have controlled for previous transition experiences. Cultural distance (the degree of dissimilarity between the host culture and the home culture) has potential to make adjustment more difficult.

Ward and Kennedy (1993b) point to several problems in sojourner adjustment studies:

(1) That although some adjustment variables will be generic, others will be culture specific.

(2) That they can be expected to fluctuate depending upon characteristics of the sojourner and type of sojourn.

(3) That further variation will occur according to acculturation strategies employed and previous experience.

Again, this suggests the process should be investigated within a given cultural context.

Adolescent Sojourners as a Unique Group for Study

The American Field Service (AFS) exchange students represent a unique group in cross-cultural research. They reside within a host family, in a host country for up to one year, whilst attending school and living in the host country. World wide 10, 000 students participate annually and most are 16-18 years old (1996, Annual AFS Report). Carsello and Creaser (1976) speculate several possible reasons why students seek an overseas experience; for an adventure, a holiday, a chance to see and live in places they have read or heard about, to meet new people who seem different and exotic, as an escape from their normal routine, freedom from parental restrictions, and to be excited and challenged. The experiences they have and the situations they encounter are likely to have some effect on both mental and physical health (Carsello & Creaser, 1976).

Findings from developmental literature concur with Carsello and Creaser's (1976) speculations. Robak and Weitzman (1995) suggest that 16 -18 year olds are in an age group where personal development and growth are dominant life themes. Adolescence can be seen as a time when a desire for separateness and independence from families occurs, but also a time where there is a need for some continued dependance and attachment. It is characterised by a desire to explore the world and to develop a sense of identity. The break from parental dominance is often achieved by declarations of independence, assuming visible differences and concealing underlying insecurities and dependencies (Kaplan, et al., 1994). For these reasons, and the incomparable sojourn of living abroad within a family, rather than for

academic, professional or tourist reasons, the AFS sample are a unique and previously under studied group in the literature.

Summary

The concept of investigating sojourner adjustment in the host culture has been in the research for some years. However, little research has focused on the adjustment of nationals who are in the process of re-entry. Operationalising what sojourner adjustment is has been varied, and understanding the processes involved has been found to be difficult, inconsistent and inconclusive. Adolescents represent a unique group for study as their reasons for going abroad and the cross-cultural experience they have, and thus their re-entry, are different than other sojourning groups.

The Grief Process

Introduction

The previous section discussed sojourner re-entry adjustment studies. As the present study seeks to explain these difficulties using loss and grief theory, an understanding of the loss and grief research is necessary.

Grief is a characteristic human emotional response that occurs in the face of loss (Sanders, 1989; Bright, 1996). Grief is a transitional period, part of which enables the emotional "letting go" of established life patterns and the ability to go on to form new ones (Hosking, 1985). Historically, grief has been linked with death, however when grief is viewed more broadly as a process to facilitate healthy adjustment to continue living, grief can be linked to any significant loss in life (Werner-Beland, 1980; Hosking, 1985; Skinner Cook & Dworkin, 1992; Ramsay, 1979).

Characteristics of Loss

The grief response occurs on several levels as illustrated in the table below;

Table 1 Commonly reported Symptoms of Grief

Feelings	Physical sensations	Cognitions	Behaviours
Sadness	Tight Chest	Disbelief	Crying
Anger	Weak in muscles	Confusion	Restless Over-activity
Shock	Lack of Energy	Preoccupation with thoughts of loss	Social Withdrawal
Anxiety	Hollow stomach	Sense of presence of the lost object	Absent-mindedness
Guilt	Tight throat	Hallucinations	Treasuring objects that are associated with the loss
Loneliness	Breathlessness	Hostility	Avoid reminders of loss
Numbness	Sense of depersonalisation	Resentment	Disturbed sleep

(Adapted from Worden, 1982; Skinner Cook, 1992; Sanders, 1989; Littlewood, 1992; Bright, 1996).

(Adapted from Worden, 1982; Skinner Cook, 1992; Sanders, 1989; Littlewood, 1992; Bright, 1996).

Grief has also been documented as a physiological process (Stroebe et al., 1993; Skinner Cook et al., 1992; Parkes, 1975, Bright, 1996) such as neurological problems (facial pain, fainting, blurred vision), dermatological (rashes, sweating), gastrointestinal (ulcers, vomiting, indigestion), cardiovascular (palpitations, chest pain), respiratory (asthma), and other general difficulties (aching, fatigue, frequent infection). Further, spouses who have been bereaved have a higher chance of mortality (Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987).

Grief is an emotion that is both international and individual at the same time. All people experience loss in their lives, in fact when researchers attempted to measure the construct of loss they were unable to find any people to fill a control group of people who had not experienced loss (Sanders, 1998). When this loss occurs they frequently share similar patterns of working through the grief process, however the experience is a uniquely personal one. An individual's sense of loss will differ from moment-to-moment and in severity and duration. In retirement, for example, the person retiring may grieve for the loss of financial income, stability, social standing in the community, sadness with the ageing process, fear of the future, sadness at the loss of business friendships and lowered feelings of self worth. While a business partner may grieve the loss of a good business mind, clients the partner brought in, the loss of the potential business future together and inside contacts. Both have been mutually affected by the same event of retirement, but each is effected in different ways. The behavioural manifestation of this grief is shaped by socio-cultural practices (Averill, 1968). Some cultures grieve openly whilst others choose to mourn in private.

Definitions

Commonly society uses the terms bereavement, grief and mourning interchangeably. This study will differentiate between the three terms: Essential to grief is the loss, real or symbolic, of something significant (Ramsay, 1981). This is bereavement. It refers

to the objective situation of an individual who has experienced a loss (Littlewood, 1992; Skinner Cook et al., 1992; Sanders, 1989; Callahan & Brasted, 1984; Ramsay, 1977). Bereavement is a term encompassing the emotions, experiences, changes, and conditions that take place as the result of a loss. Loss or bereavement is the cause of both grieving and mourning.

Grief is the emotional response to loss, which includes a number of psychological and physiological reactions (Littlewood, 1992; Skinner Cook et al., 1992; Sanders, 1989).

Mourning refers to the societal and culturally defined manner in which the grief is expressed. (Stroebe, Stroebe & Hansson, 1968). Mourning constitutes the ritual manifestations of a persons grief to a loss.

Models of Grief

Essential to the start of the grieving process is significant loss (Callahan & Brasted, 1984). Loss can be of a physical (tangible) nature or of a symbolic (intangible) nature (Sanders, 1989). Some writers have distinguished between types of tangible and intangible loss naming it; loss by death and non-death losses (Stroebe, Stroebe & Hansson, 1968). Loss by this broader definition can therefore occur in many different ways; loss by death (person, animal), loss by relationship change (divorce), loss by lifestyle changes (retirement, immigration), loss of illusions (trust, status, childhood) or loss of an object (limbs, possessions). A wide selection of literature has researched these types of loss.

Grief process models start from the time when knowledge of impending loss occurs (such as in diagnosis of a terminal illness, or future retirement), or from the actual loss (such as in sudden death, or redundancy), and generally continues until thoughts become less occupied with reviewing the past, and the present is coped with more easily.

The table below summarises some of grieving processes proposed in the literature:

Table 2 Grief Models

Averill (1968)	Kubler-Ross (1969)	Bowlby (1980)	Parkes (1972)	Worden	Sanders (1989)	Schneider
Shock	Denial	Numbing	Numbness	Accept Reality	Shock	Initial Awareness
Despair	Anger	Yearning & Searching	Pining	Experience Pain	Awareness of the loss	Strategies to overcome loss
Recovery	Bargaining	Disorganisation and despair	Depression	Adjust to loss	Conservation and withdrawal	Awareness of the loss
	Depression	Reorganisation	Recovery	Withdrawal emotional energy	Healing	Completions
	Acceptance				Renewal	Empowering the self
						Transcending the loss

These phases are fluid, occasionally they may overlap or a person may return to an earlier one. The idea that people grieve in a step by step, progressive, straight forward fashion within an allocated time period has always been contested in the literature (Bright, 1996; Skinner Cook, et al., 1992). Further it has been attributed to being detrimental to those grieving if they feel they should adhere to such a tight regime. It takes time to work through grief and therefore can not be rushed. Grieving is not a constant, and tends to come in surges (Stroebe, Stroebe & Hansson, 1993). The depth of grief and time to work through the process tends to be in proportion to: The quality and length of the relationship, the nature of the loss (accidental/unexpected), premorbid personality of the bereaved, social support systems and concurrent losses (Sanders, 1989; Funeral Directors' Association of New Zealand, 1995; Parkes, 1986; Bowlby, 1980; Stroebe et al., 1993).

Similarities of the models

All of these models share similar components. Three distinct phases are commonly illustrated in the above models. The author suggests that these models are not mutually exclusive. Firstly the models are all characterised by an intense *transient phase of the reality* of disbelief, shock, feelings of numbness, and are accompanied by some strategies to stop reality from taking hold (searching for the loss, pining and yearning). Secondly, they share a phase of *emotional pain*, depression, despair, disorganisation, and finally a phase during which the loss falls into a *new perspective* and living begins again.

The table below reorganises the existing models to illustrate their similarity, when grouped differently.

Table 3 Similarities of the Grief Models

Phases	Averill (1968)	Kubler-Ross (1969)	Parkes (1972)	Bowlby (1980)	Schneider (1981)	Worden (1982)	Sanders (1989)
Transient Phase of reality	Shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial • Anger • Bargaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness • Pining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbing • Yearning and searching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Awareness • Strategies to overcome the loss 	Accept Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock • Awareness of the loss
Pain	Despair	Depression	Depression	Disorganisation and despair	Awareness of the loss	Experience pain	Conservation and Withdrawal
New Perspective	Recovery	Acceptance	Recovery	Reorganisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completions • Empowering the self • Transcending the Loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust to the loss • Withdrawal Emotional Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing • Renewal

Methodological Issues in Grief Research

Grief as a construct has been difficult to measure. Instruments which assess grief associated with death (Texas Grief Inventory, Grief Resolution Index, and the Grief Experience Inventory) have attempted to measure symptom clusters and cognitions. More recently, the grief inventories to measure the degree of loss experienced in non-death contexts have emerged. Robak et al., (1995) stated that applying insights from loss models to a diversity of life problems has significant potential. Further, Robak et al., assert that a major loss is frequently a trigger for a series of secondary, or associated losses which add to and intensify the grief response. LaGrand (1989; cited in Robak et al., 1995), discovered that frequently reported feelings accompanying loss were: depression, anger, emptiness, loneliness, frustration, disbelief, shock, helplessness, loss of self confidence and guilt.

Grief is a difficult construct to quantify and so it has been difficult to measure. Therefore, thus far constructing measures using international control groups has proved impossible for researchers (Sanders, 1998). Most people report having felt a loss at some stage, so measures have had to distinguish between different groups of grievers. Instruments which assess grief associated with death (Texas Grief Inventory, Grief Resolution Index, and the Grief Experience Inventory) have attempted to measure symptom clusters and cognitions.

American Field Service exchange (AFS) students in Rogers et al., (1993) had Beck Depression Inventory Scale (BDI) scores below the mild depression normative range for New Zealand. Rogers suggests this may be due to the psychological resourcefulness of the sample. This finding could actually be attributable to the face validity of the measure producing an experimental demand effect, and/or that the BDI is a clinical instrument and the sample was not a clinical population and therefore the measure was not sensitive enough at the lower end of the range to accurately assess difficulties.

Summary

Grief can be conceptualised as a process that people pass through after some loss in their life. Grief has characteristic symptoms that many people share. These

symptoms and processes have more recently been operationalised and can be psychometrically measured and studied.

Aims of the present study

The previous review demonstrated that re-entry is difficult. The present study is an attempt to examine the adjustment process as relating the loss and grief theories (as outlined in the previous section). Grief was operationally defined by scores on the loss version of the Grief Experience Inventory (GEI). Psychological well being was defined by scores on the short form of the Profile of Mood States (POMS-SF) questionnaire in students who have returned to New Zealand for no more than one year.

Conceptualising sojourner adjustment in terms of grief models is something that does not appear to have ever been attempted in the research. The present study is a descriptive approach which seeks to explain the adjustment curve.

This had two main objectives; firstly to examine whether AFS sojourners experienced difficulty with psychological adjustment upon re-entry to New Zealand, and secondly to determine if the pattern of difficulties could be explained by the theories of loss and grieving. These questions provided the impetus for the study.

Objective 1: Psychological Adjustment

One hypothesis were generated in association with the first objective of the present study, to investigate the level of psychological adjustment after re-entry.

Hypothesis 1 - Well-being

That the AFS students will have the same level of psychological well being (as measured by the POMS-SF), as the home based high school control participants.

Objective 2: Loss Theories in Cross-Cultural Research

Hypothesis 1 - Death Relationship

That the grief patterns of the AFS students are similar to those following death, that is, there will not be significant differences between the AFS sojourners' GEI scale means compared to the bereaved reference groups.

Hypothesis 2 - Relationship to non-death losses

That the AFS sojourners will have significantly different means compared to the means of the control sample on the GEI.

Other items of interest

Preparedness for Return

Some research has indicated that preparedness for returning home is correlated with readjustment (Wilson, 1993). Feelings about returning home were measured by Wilson's statement likert scale.

Method

Research sample participants

The sample of 300 male and female American Field Scholar returned students was drawn from a national mailing list provided by the American Field Service New Zealand administrators. The sample comprised students who had returned to New Zealand in the last 12 months. Two responses were discarded due to incomplete questionnaires, 8 questionnaires were returned as students no longer lived at the addresses listed and three were discarded as the questionnaire was returned after the research had been completed. The number of students who completed the mail-in questionnaires was 207, comprising 154 (74.4%) females and 51 (24.6%) males, with ages of 16 years (5.8%), 17 years (34.3%) and 18 years (59.4%). The most common ethnicity reported was Paheka/European (83%) while 6 did not specify an ethnicity. The majority of respondents lived with parents (64.7%), lived in a hostel (5.3%), lived in a flat (23.2%), private boarding (5.3%) and 1.4% did not state their current living situation.

The control group of 72 participants were students attending a local high school. They participated on a voluntary basis during class time. One response was discarded as they were an exchange student living in New Zealand. The control group was of comparable age and gender to the participants. Respondants ranged in age from 16 years (4.2%), to 17 years (61.1%) and 18 years (38.9%). The majority of these respondents lived with their parents (86.1%), in a hostel (8.3%), in a flat (4.2%) and private boarding (1.4%) and identified as Paheka (89%) and the others identified as Maori (2%) or New Zealander/European (8%).

Research Instruments and Design

The sample group questionnaire comprised two instruments which, according to the literature, are indicative of loss and psychological well being; the non death loss version of the Grief Experience Inventory (GEI) and the short form of the Profile of

Mood States (POMS-SF) respectively. Several questions, posed by Wilson (1993), relating to feelings about returning home and readiness were included (See Appendix B). The questionnaires additionally contained items referring to demographic information including an area for participants to self-define their ethnic identification, the respondents' current living arrangements, intentions for 1998 and a question to assess previous sojourn experience were included. A covering information sheet provided brief information about the researcher, the purpose of the research and assured respondents of both anonymity and confidentiality.

The control group participants were asked to sign a consent form and fill out the POMS-SF. Additional questions referring to demographic information including an area for participants to self-define their ethnic identification, the respondents current living arrangements, intentions for 1998 and a question to control for previous sojourn experience was included. These control participants were not administered the GEI measure. The Grief Experience Inventory is essentially a symptomatology measure designed to assess a pervasive sense of loss. The *T*-score on the GEI gives information about how an individual scores relative to others who have experienced a loss, not people who have not experienced a loss. Further, the measure was adapted to provide an explicit understanding of the re-entry feelings the participants had. The rationale for the exclusion of this questionnaire with the control sample was that these participants had not had a sojourn experience. Thus, the adapted form would be irrelevant to participants who had not been on an exchange. If the controls had been administered the unchanged form, the participants would have been open to interpret the word "loss" in any way thus any explanation for their scores of a sense of loss would be possible. The purpose of the control sample was to provide New Zealand normative information on an adolescent sample for the POMS-SF so that a comparison with the psychological well being in the adolescents who had been away could be made.

Psychometric Information

Loss Version of the Grief Experience Inventory (GEI)

(Sanders, Mauger & Strong, 1985).

The GEI loss version consists of 135 true-false items designed to assess the experiences, feelings and symptoms of individuals during the grieving process. It is a generic version of the Grief Experience Inventory initially designed for measurement with individuals grieving a death and modelled closely on the MMPI. The GEI contains 9 bereavement scales (despair, anger/hostility, guilt, social isolation, loss of control, rumination, depersonalisation, somatization and death anxiety) and three validity scales (denial, atypical responses and social desirability). The validity scales are useful as an interpretation of a specific grief response set. However, Stake (Mental Measurement Year Book Reviewer, 1994) cautions that the meaning of the higher scores on these scales has not been explored and should therefore be carefully interpreted.

The GEI was constructed from studies on the grief experience and an earlier measure of 180 items. Each item was then coded as true or false and tested on a sample of 135 bereaved participants. From this testing the final measure was made and not cross validated with another sample (Stake, 1994). The test's author produced two forms; (1) Form A with the word "death" and (2) Form A - Loss Version with the word "loss". Both these forms use the same normative information. The test's authors then removed all the items referring specifically to death leaving 104 items and tested it with 127 people who had experienced a loss by divorce, institutionalisation of a loved one and the loss associated with having a child with an intellectual disability. The test's authors report this Form B measure can be used as a control sample in bereavement studies. The present study elected not to use the Form B as it removed the use of the scales of denial, despair, guilt, rumination and depersonalisation and had even less psychometric validity than the Form A - Loss version. A small sample of 104 participants was used to norm the measure and it has lower correlations than the other 2 versions. Instead the data presented in the manual for controls was used by the present study.

Norms from the manual are based on several studies with a total of 693 participants. The General Group are participants were 135 people who had experienced the bereavement of a close relative more than one year prior to test administration, an Early Bereavement group of 102 participants tested within 3 months of a loss and a Parents Group (people bereaved by the death of their child) obtained from participants in 8 other studies conducted by outside researchers (Sanders, 1985). None of the samples were obtained by random selection and therefore Sanders describes the data as reference points rather than normative information. The data is not presented in a timeline fashion so interpretation of grieving stages is not possible. There is no summary score on the GEI. Instead each score is plotted as a *t*-value and then each scale is interpreted separately, as in the MMPI.

Coefficient alpha reliability estimates, measuring internal consistency range from .52 to .84 (Zinner, Stutts & Philput, 1997). However, six of the nine bereavement scales have coefficient alphas below .70 (Stake, XXX). This is below the often recommended minimum value for research. Test-retest reliability coefficients for participants who are at least one year post-bereavement range from .61-.87 and compare favourably to test-retest coefficients for other personal self-report inventories (Zinner et al., 1997). The manual does not provide much information on any of the descriptive statistics and therefore the present study is unable to conduct any MANOVA's with the manual data and is therefore limited in the analysis it can conduct.

Despite these apparent psychometric limitations Walker & Pomeroy (1996) report the GEI as a valid measure of grief as it is able to differentiate between grief and depression as measured by the MMPI.

Stake (1994) suggests there is evidence that the GEI reflects the general level of distress associated with grieving and that it can differentiate this distress from psychopathology as assessed by the MMPI. Moreover, that the factor analysis gives evidence to the GEI as successfully discriminating between grieving and non-grieving respondents. This makes the GEI useful for cautious comparison the grief from the re-entry to New Zealand with other types of losses, such as death.

Further, the author found very few measures of grief (Texas Grief Inventory, the Grief Resolution Index). These possibilities were excluded due to the irrelevance for the

present study's sample (for example, the Grief Resolution Index is a seven item scale designed for use with bereaved elderly widows). Therefore, despite the psychometric limitations of the current measure it was selected in preference to the researcher compiling a new and untested measure. Additionally, the measure has been employed in various studies exploring the experience of non-death losses; with caregivers to differentiate between depression and grief (Walker & Pomeroy, 1996), the loss of romantic relationships in adolescents (Robak & Weitzman, 1995), the grief process in head injured adult (Haynes, 1994), mothers' grief after child's head injuries (Zinner, Ball, Stutts & Mikulka, 1991), and adoptive experiences (Blanton & Deschner, 1990).

Adaptation of the GEI for the present study

There were 41 of the 135 items of the GEI were adapted. Of these changes 36 were simple substitutions of the word loss with; "host country", "returning home" or "New Zealand" to make the measure directly relevant to the sample group of sojourners. Five changes were necessary that attempted to capture the essence and feeling of the question without improving the question. Items 8, 35, 42, 83, 95 (See Appendix B for these changes). Therefore due to these changes and the psychometric properties of the original measure caution with the reporting of the results is required.

The Profile of Mood States - Short Form (POMS-SF);

Shacham (1983).

The POMS was originally designed by McNair, Droppleman, and Lorr and is one of the most commonly used measures of psychological distress (Curran, Andrykowski & Stduts, 1995). The 37 item short form was developed by Shacham (1983). This contains a 5-point Likert type scale of intensity that "best describes how you have been feeling during the past week including today". One week provides a longer state measure of the moment, but is shorter than a trait measure (Kaye, Lawton, Gitlin, Kleban, Windsor, & Kaye, 1988). The measure comprises 6 sub scales: tension, depression, anger, vigor, fatigue and confusion (characteristics commonly ascribed to

sojourners experiencing culture shock). Scores range between 0 and 148, with higher scores indicating greater mood disturbance.

Curran and colleagues (1995) found the internal consistency estimates for the POMS-SF were comparable to the original POMS, and therefore believe it to be an excellent alternative to the POMS when a brief measure of psychological distress is required. Correlation's between total mood disturbance and subscale scores on the POMS-SF and those on the original POMS exceeded .95 (Curran et al., 1995). Malouff, Schutte and Ramerth (1985), found the POMS-SF to have a mean and standard deviation close enough to the original POMS to allow for prorating of POMS-SF scores with the normative information of the POMS original form norms.

Ward and Kennedy (1993) and Ward and Searle (1991) have employed the POMS previously in their research as a measure of psychological well being with New Zealand AFS students and report finding the scale to be valid and reliable.

Feelings about Returning Home Questionnaire

(Wilson, 1993)

The Wilson questionnaire was added as a item of interest in the present study to assess sojourner participants experience of returning home. It is a measure with high face validity and was included to confirm re-entry difficulties and their nature.

Statements in Wilson (1993) were compiled from her initial interviews with returned exchange sojourners from Ecuador, Australia, Norway and Sweden. These statements were then inserted into a questionnaire with a 4 point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Statements regarding feelings about returning home were reproduced in this study, with slight adaptations to allow a better fit for the New Zealand context (See Appendix A).

Procedure

The AFS Participants

300 AFS students on the American Field Service New Zealand Branch mailing list were sent questionnaire packs with an information sheet explaining the study and a pre-paid return envelope and requested to return them within one week.

The Control Participants

Students from Feilding Agricultural High School, a local high school were approached by the researcher during the first class of the day. The researcher explained the study, gave out the information sheet and requested volunteers. Written consent was obtained to participate. Students were then administered the POMS-SF questionnaire which was collected and collated by the researcher.

Statistical analysis

Each questionnaire response was entered into a computer file, for analysis and processing using Statistica.

(1) Descriptive statistics, summarizing the information elicited were computed. These included means, standard deviations, ranges, and percentages.

(2) Appropriate statistical t-tests were used to determine whether mean differences between the groups were significant in the absence of manual data for calculating MANOVAs.

Analysis

Objective 1: Psychological Adjustment

Hypothesis 1 - Well-being

That the AFS students will have the same level of psychological well-being (as measured by the POMS-SF), as the high school control participants.

As shown in Table 4, no significant difference [$t(120) = .40, p > .05$] was found between the scores of the AFS sample group (46.02) and the high school control participants (47.29) means and standard deviations (22.12 and 23.22 respectively) on the POMS-SF. Included in the table are the original POMS means for college students (74.52) which were calculated by Kaye et al., 1998, precluding the reporting of a standard deviation. Therefore, the data is presented for descriptive comparison and should not be viewed as age score norms.

Table 1 Comparison of psychological well-being of sojourners and New Zealand high school controls and American College student controls on the POMS-SF.

	AFS Sojourners POMS-SF	High school Control POMS-SF	College * Student POMS
Mean	46.02	47.29	74.52
Standard Deviation	22.12	23.22	

*(data from Kaye et al., 1998).

Objective 2: Loss Theories in Cross-Cultural Research

Hypothesis 1 - Death Relationship

That the grief patterns of the AFS students are similar to those following death, that is, there will not be significant differences between the AFS sojourners GEI means compared to the bereaved reference groups.

In the analysis of differences between the AFS sojourners and the reference groups, an absence of significance alludes to the two groups sharing similar levels of distress. For this reason the tables illustrate the non-significant differences rather than significant differences, which is more commonly presented in the literature.

Three series of two-tailed independent t -tests were performed between the AFS sojourners t -values and those of the 3 reference groups provided in the GEI manual (Parents -

Three series of two-tailed independent *t*-tests were performed between the AFS sojourners *t*-values and those of the 3 reference groups provided in the GEI manual (Parents - were bereaved by the death of a child, Early - people bereaved by death who participated within two months of their loss, and General - college students who were bereaved by death of a close relative within the preceding year).

The degrees of freedom (*df*) for the procedure were 397, 307, and 319 respectively. However, the highest *df* value on the distribution table used was 120 and therefore this figure was used for the significance testing making the *t*-test more conservative. The level of significance was set at 0.05 to detect any small difference between the groups. The potential for multiple-*t* error occurs when a large number of *t*-tests are performed as the alpha level diminishes with repeated testing and the chance of Type-I error increases. It is therefore likely that around 5% of the significant *t*-test results will be attributable to chance. Unfortunately due to the lack of information presented in the GEI manual no multi-variate analyses of variance were possible.

No significance between the AFS sojourners and the Parents group means was found on the scales of *Guilt* [$t(120) = 0.97, p < .05$] and *Social isolation* [$t(120) = .81, p < .05$]. When the present study's data was contrasted to the means of the Early group no significant differences were found on the scales of *Loss of control* [$t(120) = 1.0, p < .05$] and *Death anxiety* [$t(120) = 6.2, p < .05$]. Finally, compared to the General group no significant differences between the group were recorded on the scales of denial [$t(120) = .58, p < .05$], guilt [$t(120) = .40, p < .05$], loss of control [$t(120) = 1.27, p < .05$], anger/hostility [$t(120) = 8.69, p < .05$] and depersonalisation [$t(120) = 1.72, p < .05$]. No significant differences were found in 8 comparisons.

The results of *t*-tests are displayed on the table 5 over the page.

Table 5 *T*-test results of sojourners compared to the 3 reference groups on the subscales of the GEL.

Scale	Parents	Early	General
Denial	2.706	2.313	0.576 ~
Guilt	0.916 ~	2.564	0.396 ~
Loss of Control	3.115	1.002 ~	1.273 ~
Anger/Hostility	6.387	2.354	8.685 ~
Social Isolation	0.806 ~	0.091	1.427
Social Desirability	7.567	8.247	3.351
Death Anxiety	4.147	0.616 ~	3.194
Somatization	4.418	4.881	15.213
Despair	5.619	5.484	4.633
Atypical Response	3.408	7.549	3.876
Rumination	4.451	5.279	4.830
Depersonalisation	3.874	2.667	1.715 ~

~ Denotes no significant difference at $p < 0.05$; all other are significant.

Hypothesis 2 - Relationship to non-death losses

That the AFS sojourners will have significantly different means compared to the GEL provided control sample.

To test this hypothesis a *t*-test was performed on the GEL scales Form A -Loss version and Form B have in common; Atypical responding, Social desirability, Anger/hostility, Social isolation, Loss of control, Somatization and Death anxiety. The *df* (120) was the tables highest *df* value, a conservative level. The alpha level was also set conservatively at .01 to ensure any differences detected would not be due to chance effects. The presence of a statistically significant difference between the two groups suggests that they are not experiencing similar levels of distress, therefore to highlight this in contrast to the previous table, the table in this section presents the statistically significant differences.

Of the 7 *t*-tests completed there were 5 significant differences between the AFS sojourners and those experiencing a loss by divorce, institutionalisation of a loved one and having a child with a developmental disability. These differences occurred on the scales of; *Atypical responding* [$t(120) = 14.61, p < .01$], *Anger/hostility* [$t(120) = 6.14, p < .01$], *Social isolation* [$t(120) = 5.86, p < .01$], *Loss of control* [$t(120) = 12.20, p < .01$], and *Death anxiety* [$t(120) = 3.72, p < .01$].

Somatization [$t(120) = 1.78, p < .01$] and *Social desirability* [$t(120) = 2.64, p < .01$] were not significantly different. Table 6 below illustrates the *t*-test findings.

Table 6 *T*-test results of the sojourners compared to the control data.

Scale	Loss control group <i>t</i> value
Atypical responding	14.613***
Social desirability	2.264
Anger/Hostility	6.142***
Social isolation	5.856***
Loss of Control	12.196***
Somatization	1.776
Death Anxiety	3.721***

*** denotes significant difference.

Other items of interest

Feelings about returning home

On the answers to the questions from Wilson (1993), 99% of respondents believed that they learned to appreciate what New Zealand is really like. Over half the sample believed it had been easier to go to the host country than to return to New Zealand (69%). Sixty one percent of AFS sojourners agreed that it had not been easy to come back and it was frustrating (66%), despite 75% indicating that they had prepared themselves to return home.

An ambivalent feeling about being back was present in the sample, most respondents (84%) indicating that half of them wanted to stay in the host-country and half of them wanted to return, for 92% of respondents part of their heart is still in the host country, and 62% described feeling as though they had to fit back in to New Zealand as fast as they could. In terms of re-adjustment to New Zealand culture most participants (93%) felt that they had changed a lot inside and 53% felt they did not fit in again. AFS sojourners reported more difficulty relating to their New Zealand friends again (48%) than their mother (23%), father (22%), or siblings (19%).

Table 7 below displays the percentage of participants endorsing each response for the statements. The presents study's participants gave similar responses to Wilson's sample. Wilson's results are presented in italic font below the presents study's for each item in the table on the following page for comparison.

Table 7 Comparison of the Wilson study (data in italics) responses to the sojourner's responses.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	n
I prepared myself to come back to New Zealand and go on with life	20 <i>20</i>	55 <i>54</i>	22 <i>23</i>	39 <i>3</i>	205 <i>36</i>
Half of me wanted to stay in my host country and half of me wanted to come home	52 <i>76</i>	32 <i>15</i>	11 <i>5</i>	4 <i>4</i>	207 <i>136</i>
It has been great to see everybody again	44 <i>47</i>	49 <i>44</i>	7 <i>7</i>	0 <i>1</i>	206 <i>136</i>
It's been easy to come back	7 <i>11</i>	32 <i>24</i>	35 <i>33</i>	26 <i>32</i>	207 <i>136</i>
I was happy to see family and friends again but part of my heart is still in my host country	56 <i>85</i>	36 <i>15</i>	7 <i>0</i>	1 <i>0</i>	205 <i>14</i>
I've had to fit in as fast I as I could	22	40	33	5	206
I was ready to come back to New Zealand	15 <i>13</i>	38 <i>60</i>	29 <i>27</i>	16 <i>0</i>	207 <i>14</i>
I learned to appreciate what my country was really like	63 <i>46</i>	33 <i>54</i>	4 <i>0</i>	0 <i>0</i>	206 <i>14</i>
Coming back was frustrating	28 <i>14</i>	38 <i>24</i>	28 <i>40</i>	6 <i>21</i>	207 <i>86</i>
I had changed a lot inside and I felt I didn't fit in again	17 <i>10</i>	36 <i>36</i>	37 <i>35</i>	10 <i>20</i>	207 <i>86</i>
It was easier to go than to come back	43 <i>34</i>	26 <i>24</i>	22 <i>24</i>	9 <i>15</i>	207 <i>36</i>
I've changed a lot inside	50 <i>14</i>	43 <i>40</i>	6 <i>23</i>	.4 <i>17</i>	206 <i>36</i>
* I have found it difficult to relate to my father again	6	16	39	39	194
* I have found it difficult to relate to my mother again	6	17	36	41	206
* I have found it difficult to relate to my siblings again	3	16	45	38	197
* I have found it difficult to relate to my New Zealand friends since I have been back	18	30	33	20	205

Note: SA =strongly agree, A = agree, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree n= number of responses

The table is calculated on percentages rounded to 1 decimal place.

* added for the present study

Discussion

The present study had four aims. Firstly, it investigated if sojourners experienced re-entry problems. Secondly, it sought to examine if the sojourners' experienced mood disturbance and psychological adjustment difficulties relative to the peers. Thirdly, it determined if the sojourners responded similarly to individuals in the process of grieving and fourthly, on what levels it was similar to bereavement. These four aims will be expanded on through the discussion.

Experience of Re-entry Difficulties.

Hypothesis 1 - Psychological Well being

The statements in the Wilson questionnaire (1993) suggests that the majority (69%) of the sojourners found the experience of re-entry to be difficult and indeed more difficult than the process of moving to live in the host country. This difficulty occurred despite half the sample (53%) believing they were ready to come back and three quarters of the sample feeling as though they had prepared themselves for re-entry into New Zealand (75%). This finding is consistent with other researchers findings in the area of re-entry (Adler, 1981; Carsello et al., 1976; Westwood et al., 1986).

Over 90% of the sample believed that they had changed a lot inside and half of these (53%) believed that they didn't fit in again. It could be expected that a feeling of not belonging anymore would be difficult for the sojourners however, the any psychological difficulties sojourners experienced were not causing an elevation on the POMS-SF. In fact there was no significant difference between the AFS sojourners scores and those of a home based high school sample of a similar age who had not been away. This finding is consistent with Ward and Kennedy (1993). Interestingly, the New Zealand data the present study provided is lower than the scores for college students norms based on American students. This may suggest the face-validity of the measure and social desirability factors could have influenced the scores to lower with the New Zealand sample, that New Zealanders are a more psychologically hardy group or that the AFS sojourners have already adjusted over the year at home to normative levels for their peers.

Similarities with Grieving Models.

The results indicate that the sojourners are more like people who are grieving the loss of a loved one after a death than people who are experiencing loss by a relationship change (divorce or institutionalisation)

Hypothesis 1 - Death relationship.

This hypothesis that the sojourners were similar to the bereaved sample was partially supported. The sojourning group did have similar elevations to the bereaved group on several scales using a conservative alpha value of .01. The present study's participants were most like those bereaved by a loved one less than a year ago (General Group) than either those who have been bereaved for just over six weeks (Early Group) or those bereaved by the death of their child (Parents Group). Five of the twelve scales were not significantly different to the General group (those who had experienced a death one year ago). These were; Denial, Guilt, Loss of Control, Anger/Hostility and Depersonalisation scales.

The Denial scale can be interpreted as a hesitancy to admit common, but socially undesirable weaknesses and feelings. However, as the Social desirability scale was not elevated in the AFS sojourners, an alternative interpretation of this heightening can suggest an adaptive coping mechanism of self-protection in the face of a loss. As there is no difference between the sojourners and the General bereaved sample on this scale, it may suggest that the AFS sojourners are protecting themselves against admitting to a sense of loss, in the face of societal expectations that the exchange is only a positive experience. Sojourners may perceive that their peers and social networks have this expectation of positive experiences, and therefore try to live up to this expectation. This effort may suppress sojourners communicating disadvantages of returning from the exchange as a self-protection coping skill.

The Guilt scale is an expression of feelings that an individual is somehow responsible for the loss or for having survived. There was no difference between the AFS sojourners and the General bereavement group on this scale. A possible interpretation of this finding is that the AFS sojourners felt a sense of prepared loss,

that is knew that the exchange was for a limited time, and knew it would eventually come to an end. Perhaps, the guilt they feel is for not coping with their return more effectively because their return was an anticipated loss. However, grief literature suggests that although a death may be anticipated (as in the case of a terminal disease) knowing the end is going to happen, does not necessarily make it easier to cope with when it does arrive (Sanders, 1989). An alternative or contributing interpretation of this finding is that the AFS sojourners may feel a sense of guilt for have left their host family and friends, and find it difficult to deal with this in front of their New Zealand family and friends. This sense of guilt may arise out of feelings of loyalty and attachment to both families and groups of friends.

Loss of Control indicates a person's inability to control overt emotions like crying. There was no significant difference between those who have lived for a year after the death of a loved one, and the AFS sojourners who have been back in New Zealand for a year. This finding is in contrast with the first hypothesis that found no difference between the home-based controls and the sojourners on the POMS-SF measure of psychological adjustment. It is likely that this apparent conflict could be attributed to the sojourners on a surface level getting on with their lives and coping well, but on a slightly deeper level still having ready access to the feels of a sense of loss and confusion about returning home. The Grief literature would suggest this to be true as after a year post-bereavement many individuals still have a grieving reaction to the mention of the deceased name, favourite music and anniversaries (for example, Christmas and birthdays; Sanders, 1989).

Anger/Hostility scale suggests a person's level of irritation, anger and feelings of injustice. Again, no significant difference between the two groups was found. There are four possible explanations as to why the sojourners feel a sense of anger and hostility can be made:

- (1) That the sojourners may feel hostile toward the AFS administration process on two levels: Firstly, a sense of dissatisfaction with the lack preparation from coming home and secondly, for the absence of a debriefing once they arrive back in New Zealand. This speculation is supported by the qualitative information participants volunteered (see "Response Rate" below for more details).
- (2) That expressing the sojourn experience to friends and family when they only want short answers, have not been to the host country themselves, or are the minimising of

the experience may be frustrating. This lack of ability to communicate the exchange is consistent with Wilsons (1993) findings.

(3) That the people the sojourner interact with in New Zealand may expect that after several months the sojourner should be moving on from their experiences and not continue talking about it . This could produce feelings of resentment and injustice in the sojourners. Grief literature concurs with this speculation as many family and friends anticipate that after a certain period when they have stopped thinking about the death the bereaved individual should have as well (Sanders, 1989).

(4) That sojourners may feel that others in their lives have not recognised the personal growth and development they feel within themselves and expect the sojourner to return to the same social roles they had before they left. These roles include their standing within the family and their peer group. This finding is further supported by the results of the Wilson questionnaire where 53% of respondents felt they no longer fitted into their old lives.

Depersonalisation measures numbness, shock and confusion of loss. The test author suggests that this scale is particularly elevated when severe feelings of loss of control of a person's environment or universe occur (Sanders et al., 1985). The *t*-scores of the AFS sojourner and the General group are within one standard deviation of the mean. This similarity suggests that people who are grieving generally feel a common sense of lack of control over their environment and that life is going on but they feel slightly removed from it. It is to be expected that the sojourners will feel somewhat detached from their lives as the familiar cues and reinforcers from their time away are gone and they are having to readjust to the old cues of life before. In the developmental literature the adolescent age group have life styles are quite dynamic, friendships alter and develop as do parental relationships. This confusion may produce a sense of depersonalisation.

The sojourners had two similar scale elevations to those bereaved by the death of their child (Parents Group) on *Guilt* (a feeling of being somehow to blame and for having survived the deceased) as discussed above, and *Social isolation* (a feeling of social isolation from others and is characterised by withdrawal from social contacts and responsibilities). The *Social isolation* elevation is to be expected as previous relationship had to be renegotiated upon the sojourners return to New Zealand, and is further supported by the results on the Wilson questionnaire that almost half of the

sojourners felt they had difficulty relating to their New Zealand friends and family again.

When the AFS sojourners scale scores were compared with the Early bereavement group (6 weeks or more post-bereavement); Loss of control (a persons inability to control their overt emotions; for example, crying) as discussed above and Death anxiety (the intensity of one's personal death awareness) had no significant difference between the groups. That there was no significant difference in Death anxiety is a surprising finding. It was expected that people who very recently suffered a bereavement would spend some time considering death and may feel anxious about things associated with it, for example, viewing a dead body. However, the AFS sojourners had a similar level of death anxiety, the shared level may be reflective of the frequency that adolescents think about death (as indicated by suicidal thoughts illustrated in the Mental Health Foundation Suicide Prevention Manual), or an inexperience and lack of exposure to death.

Hypothesis 2 - Relationship to non-death losses

AFS sojourners were more dissimilar to the control score pattern than similar. Despite a conservative alpha set at .01 making it harder to find significant differences between the AFS sample and the control sample, of the seven scales the Form B version of the GEI shares with the Form A, the sojourners were significantly different from the people experiencing a loss by divorce, institutionalisation of a loved one (Control Group) on five scales; Atypical Responding, Anger/Hostility, Social Isolation, Loss of Control and Death Anxiety. Atypical responding indicates the tendency to endorse items that less than 25% of the normative sample did, this scale contains many somatic items and may suggest the sojourners had more "grief" symptoms than the controls.

Response rate.

The present study obtained a return rate of the questionnaire of 73%. After filling in the questionnaires they received, 23 of the respondents wrote lengthy letters, telephoned or visited the researcher to give further information about their experiences. Qualitative information was not solicited in the present study, however many respondents voluntarily provided extra information. Several explanations are likely and these are summarised below;

(a) As returnees many have felt a need to “work through” their re-entry experiences,

“Filling out the questionnaire has done me some good to go through all my feelings since coming home...it hasn't always been easy and I've been a bit of a mess sometimes, all these questions helped me to sort out exactly how I'm feeling”

“It has been a difficult time coping with being back in NZ, your questionnaire was extremely relevant to the way I've felt in the past 12 months - even today”

(b) Although some returnee's did not understand the why some items were in the measures they felt that the goal of the study was worthwhile and that their participation could facilitate this goal

“I would like to commend you on your topic, I have often wondered about the 'returnee experience' and if AFS stand for “another fucked up student!””. (sic)

“It's about time someone paid attention to the way life affects exchange students on their return home”

“I feel quite strongly that there is something missing in the exchange programme for the returnee...I think exchange programmes should consider the mental and emotional and psychological effects especially for students who go to developing countries”

"Many AFSers I've talked to say their minds have been screwed around with...current support for returnee's is inadequate"

(c) may have disagreed with the research slant and wanted their disagreement to be registered.

"I guess I'm not much of a typical returnee; either I'm really callous or just level headed but I have experienced almost no problems since my return from Finland last June...I know of some returnee's who have had difficulty finding their places in their old lives again...but ...I have been able to relate to my family and friends better since my return"

"Your questions were so negative and personal...you seem to think AFS exchanges are traumatic and you feel the need to discover some unstable people and blame it on AFS...I had an amazing time in Brazil and have found life back here so much richer in so many ways, I don't know another AFS returnee who wouldn't say the same thing"

"I have had no difficulty,...I feel my faith has really helped me through this potentially traumatic time"

"Coming home is harder, but what you get for going is well worth it"

"I think you're digging in a hole with these questions"

(d) felt their answers were attributable to other life events

"My answers are likely to be influenced by the fact my mother is dying of cancer, but I have tried as much as possible to think of life from a returnee point of view"

"My parents separated while I was away, this made relating to my parents again difficult"

"My girlfriend started seeing someone else while I was away, I couldn't cope when I found out once I was home"

(e) wanted to share how they have coped

"I had no reorientation in my host country or on return...I feel I belong more to my host country so I'm saving to go back"

"I have to pretend to be how I used to be, in order to fit back in again"

"My boyfriend went too, so we have supported each other since we have been back"

Others ticked their responses several times to indicate they felt strongly about answers they gave, or darkened their answer several times, especially on questions regarding - "looking at photo's of my host country is too painful" (n=18), "I think about my host country all the time" some wrote too painful beside that question (n = 9).

(f) Or had found re-entry difficult

"I've been back for almost a year, like many others I have found settling back to be particularly hard"

"Sometimes I think it would have been better not to go at all, my life would be easier now....most of my friends and I have had to go through a long readjustment stage, and some still are"

"Returning home was harder than I ever imagined, I have had to give myself space to heal and recover"

(g) that the sojourners may not have had enough opportunities to discuss their exchange with someone who is interested or respondents may have viewed filling in the questionnaire as a means of sharing their life experiences with an adult figure which may not be a common experience for their peers

"Thank you for this opportunity to tell someone what it has been like coming back"

(h) the average age of the respondents was 18 years and as such perhaps don't receive much mail. Many were in the middle of their summer break and may have been looking for a way to fill up time and therefore may have completed the questionnaires for the novelty,

"Well it was fun filling out the questionnaires, hope my answers have not ruined your thesis"

Another startling factor of the respondents there was no question asking what country sojourners went to. Despite this, 114 respondents included this information voluntarily. However the use of such information on host countries was beyond the scope of the present study. It would be interesting to determine if the host country students lived in affects their adjustment, for example cultures of higher dissimilarity (Peru and Iceland) from New Zealand.

The present study sought to apply an existing theoretical model to the process of re-acculturation into an individuals home culture. The results suggest that AFS sojourners are more like people grieving a death than those coping with a non-death loss. This may be due to a consequence of AFS administration policy which dictates that sojourners must not return to the host country for one year post-exchange in order to allow the host family to re-adjust and for the student to re-adjust. Some sojourners will be unlikely to ever see the people they met again and this in itself parallels death more than non-death loss.

The application of grieving models to a variety of life's problems has been a growth area in mainstream psychology in the last few years. Despite this there are few psychometric measures of grief that allow for the process to be studied quantitatively. The GEI has some potential as a measure of grief, however given its limited psychometric properties other measures should be employed as well. The response rate and depth of feelings from participants is suggestive of a need to investigate the process of the re-entry experience in greater detail. Due to the quantitative nature of the present research individual experience could not be captured fully. It may be that a continuum operates; from those who adapt quickly with minimal difficulties to those who require a longer process of gradual adjustment, this is in itself consistent with the theory of grieving. Additionally to capture the individual experience it may demonstrate a need for further more in depth and qualitative future research to

investigate the phenomenon of cross cultural transitions. Sussman (1986) hypothesised that re-entry stress is more severe than initial culture shock, that individuals who adapt successfully overseas have more difficulty returning, but the students who adapt overseas have smoother re-entry than no adaptation overseas. This could also provide a direction for further study by assessing the degree of attachment and adjustment to the host culture as a predicting variable for grieving upon return. The Grief literature suggests that a strong attachment would lead to greater feelings of loss.

The hypothesis of a grieving process implies longitudinal within individual changes, however due to time constraints the data had to be collected cross sectionally. It potentially affected the results by using participants who may have already processed through the stages of grief. Future research could profitably apply insights from loss and grieving models to adjustment by examining this longitudinal process by systematic psychological assessment within individuals over time. This would be helpful in verifying the process concept of grief and repeated measurements could allow for observation of the grieving process as it occurs. It is also possible the model could be extended and applied to adjustment in the host culture.

Future directions for research in this area are to replicate the present study with other exchange programmes. Extension of the current study to examine other groups of sojourners (those on their "OE: Overseas experience" - working holiday abroad) could determine if re-entry is facilitated by the structure of the exchange programme or not.

In managing grief and loss, individuals typically want others to recognise the uniqueness of their loss but also to feel that others share some similarities with what they are coping with and that they are not alone. It has been suggested that to avoid re-entry problems individuals discuss homecoming difficulties with others who have travelled (Locke & Feinsod, 1982). Therefore it is advised that AFS programmes should include; post departure training strategies before leaving the host culture and re-entry workshops once home with other sojourners.

Finally, research investigating how the AFS sample differ from their peers pre-departure to the host country may give supplementary information about their coping resources and personality characteristics. It should also be remembered that AFS students represent a specific kind of sojourner, in that they live within the new/host

culture for up to 12 months within a supported environment. This should be taken into account in the extension of any research findings.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Feelings about Returning Home Questionnaire

Please read the statements and tick the box that best describes your feelings.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I prepared myself to come back to New Zealand and go on with life. <i>I prepared myself to come back and go on with my life</i>				
*I have found it difficult to relate to my mother again.				
Half of me wanted to stay in my host country and half of me wanted to come home. <i>Half of me wanted to stay there and half of me wanted to come back</i>				
It's been great to see everybody again.				
It's been easy to come back.				
*I have found it difficult to relate to my father again.				
I've had to fit back in as fast as I could. <i>I've got to fit in as fast as I can</i>				
I was happy to see family and friends again, but part of my heart is still in my host country. <i>I was happy to see my friends and family again, but part of my heart is still in the United States</i>				
I was ready to come back to New Zealand.				
*I have found it difficult to relate to my siblings again.				
I learned to appreciate what my country was really like.				
*I have found it difficult to relate to my New Zealand friends since I've been back.				
Coming back was frustrating.				
I had changed a lot inside and I felt I didn't fit in again.				
It was easier to go than to come back. <i>It's easier to go than to come back</i>				
I have changed a lot inside. <i>I have changed a lot inside and I felt I didn't fit in</i>				

* Added because of AFS anecdotal evidence

Appendix B

Grief Experience Inventory

Listed below in italics is the actual statement in the GEI, above is the change. Thirty-six of the changes allowed a simple substitution of returning home, or host country for the word loss. Five changes were required that attempted to capture the essence of the statement for the differing context. The instructions were altered for relevance to the exchange programme.

Below are a list of statements that describe feelings people have. Please read each one carefully. Then tick the one box that best describes how you have felt since you have returned from your host country.

1. Immediately after coming home I felt exhausted.

Immediately after my loss I felt exhausted

3. I am strongly preoccupied with thoughts of host country.

I am strongly preoccupied with thoughts of the loss

8. It seems to me I could have done more to stay in my host country. . .

It seems to me I could have done more to prevent the loss

9. I showed little emotion after returning home.

I showed little emotion after the loss

10. I felt a strong necessity for maintaining the morale of other returnee's after returning home.

I felt a strong necessity for maintaining the morale of others after my loss

14. I was unable to cry when I left my host country.

I was unable to cry at the announcement of the loss

19. I am comforted by believing that returning home was inevitable. . .

I am comforted by believing the loss was meant to be

20. I have had frequent headaches since returning home.

I have had frequent headaches since the loss

21. It was difficult to part with certain articles that I used in the host country but have no need for now.

It was difficult to part with certain articles I used before the loss but have no use for now

22. It was necessary to take sleeping pills after returning home.
 ***It was necessary to take sleeping tablets after the loss***

25. I have taken tranquillisers since returning home.
I have taken tranquillisers since the loss

28. Upon first getting on the plane to leave my host country I had a dazed feeling.
Upon first learning of the loss I had a dazed feeling

31. I experienced a feeling when I returned home that "something had died within me"
I experienced a feeling when the loss occurred that 'something had died within me'

34. I could not cry until well after I had returned home.
I could not cry until well after I had learned of my loss

35. I feel that I may in some way have contributed to the stress of returning home
I feel that I may have in some way contributed to the loss

36. I find myself still acting in ways which are similar to ways I acted before returning home.
I find myself acting in ways which are similar to ways I acted before the loss

37. I made arrangements after I returned home.
I made all the arrangements after the loss

40. I feel that have aged since returning home.
I feel that the loss has aged me

41. I have never dreamed about things as they were before returning home.
I have never dreamed about things as they were before the loss

43. I have difficulty believing that I have left my host country.
I have difficulty believing the loss has actually occurred

44. I feel a strong desire to complete certain unfinished tasks begun before I returned home.
I feel a strong desire to complete certain unfinished tasks begun before the loss took place

45. I have often dreamed of times that took place before I came back.
I have dreamed of times that took place before the loss

47. I have dreamed about leaving my host country since I've been back.

I have dreamed of the loss after it happened

51. I am so busy that I hardly have time to grieve over my returning home.

I am so busy that I hardly have time to grieve over my loss

57. Looking at photographs of times in my host country is too painful.

Looking at photographs of times before the loss took place, is too painful

60. I have had brief moments when I actually felt anger at returning home.

I have had brief moments when I actually felt anger at having my loss

61. I have no trouble sleeping since being back.

I have had no trouble sleeping since the loss

64. It comforts me to talk with others who have had a similar exchange experience.

it comforts me to talk with others who have had a similar loss

65. I yearn for my life in my host country.

I yearn for my life before the loss

69. There are times when I have the feeling that I never left New Zealand.

There are times when I have a feeling that the loss did not take place

78. I often wish I could express the burden of returning home without anyone else suffering.

I often wish I could assume the burden of the loss without anyone else suffering

80. I sometimes talk with myself about returning home.

I sometimes talk with myself about the loss

83. It is hard to maintain my religious faith in light of all the pain and suffering caused by returning home

It is hard to maintain my religious faith in light of all the pain and suffering caused by the loss

86. I find myself idealising my life in my host country.

I find myself idealising my life before the loss

92. I think about my host country all the time.

I think about the loss all the time

94. I drink a lot more alcohol now than before I returned home. .

I drink more alcohol now than before the loss

95. When I learned of my departure dates, I thought " I'm not ready to go home yet"

When I learned of the loss I thought 'this could not be happening to me'

121. I feel myself sighing more now than before returning home.

I feel myself sighing more now than before the loss

122. I spent a great deal of time with myself before going on the exchange.

I spent a great deal of time with myself before the loss

125. I feel that I handled returning home fairly well.

I feel I handled the loss fairly well