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INTEGRATION OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES: VIEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Encouraging hospitality students in reflective and transformative learning toward a global mindset becomes an imperative for developing their cross-culturally professional competency in preparation of the future career path development. Oversea exchange programs are among the initiatives to raise personal, professional and cultural awareness for the hospitality students in a pathway to encourage cross-cultural learning among students in similar fields. However, to what

extent the development of a global mindset gained from the cross-cultural experiences could help undergraduate hospitality students gain their professional competency in terms of cultural skills in the hospitality and tourism context is the main issue to be described by this study. Content analysis has been conducted on in-depth interview data given by hospitality oversea exchange students who are both current students and graduated ones. The most popular modes of international student exchanges such as team project, assignment, presentations, and travel exchanges are taken into consideration to highlight deeper insights into a mutual interest between the cross-cultural experiences and the professional competency related cultural skills. The study reveals that cultural understanding needs to be experienced in the real setting context. Furthermore, we also discovered that cultural exchange outcomes are normally obtained in the daily informal practices instead of formal studies. However, the current study is constrained within few selected countries where students have been experienced and the current partnership between the home and host Institutions. This paper provides actionable guidelines and approach for integrating the critical component of cultural exchange program in the traditional curriculum program of hospitality.

Keywords

Cross-cultural experiences, Professional competency, Reflective learning, Transformative learning, Global mindset

1. Introduction

Opposing from habitual action, reflection is the process of critically evaluate an experience in order to interpret and give meaning to a given action or experience (Mezirow & Taylor, 2011). The critical reflection is therefore enables learners questioning the deeply assumptions and beliefs which have been developed throughout the years, allowing the recognition of conflicts of thoughts, feelings, and actions that leads to the transformation of knowledge and perception (Mezirow & Taylor, 2011). Similarly, according to Heppner and Wang (2014), the critical reflection or mindfulness is needed to gain insights, which are essential for understanding unfamiliar events and avoiding prejudice, which might appear with the premature cognitive commitment.

However, past research has indicated that often too much emphasis is placed on *rational* learning approach, which focuses on the relationship among “analysis”, “thinking”, and “change

actions” with little concern on the *relational* or *affective* learning approach (Taylor, 2000). According to Brown (2006), learners are more prone to the transformation of “see, feel, and change sequence” which is usually occurring through the *relational* or *affective* learning process. Several studies have highlighted the significance of *affective learning*, which relates to the emotion and feeling occurred in the process of learning and transformation (Taylor, 2000). Exploring feelings in-depth enables the self-awareness process, which in turn triggers the self-reflection, leading to the change in perception as well as the increase of tolerance toward ambiguity and self-trust. This affective learning can be triggered through integrating circumstances learning which can be gained from attending, experiencing, and observing the real events (Taylor, 2000).

According to Smith (2012), global mindset is often needed for workers to be accepted and promoted in an international working environment, which has become increasingly popular in recent years (Smith, 2012). Hence, global, international, and intercultural trainings have been articulated in many training programs in colleges and universities in the search for higher qualification assurance and accreditation (Smith, 2012). In hospitality training major, intercultural training is even more necessary to ensure higher adaptability of students in different working environments after graduating. In the search for effectiveness in cultural and interpersonal training, many exchange programs have been offered for students. Exchange program is considered as a chance for which experimental experiment and reflective learning activities can be fostered, enabling students recognize and accept the differences and diversity in working and socializing (Billig & Eyler, 2003). Students who engage in the exchange program are believed to experience not only new learning methods but also cross-cultural learning and working setting, which develops global mindset and personal competencies needed for future career.

Indeed, it is noted that there is an increasing numbers of international students applying for exchange programs to UK in recent years, make up 32000 students in 2006, including those from European Union (EU) and non-EU zones (Kreber, 2010). This number is predicted to rise in the future. However, while exchange program is popular among Chinese, Hong Kong, Indian, and Singapore students, this oversea exchange program is not common amongst Vietnamese students.

In order to understand the multicultural differences, Sue (2001, p.799) has developed a model of multiple dimensions of cultural competence (MDCC) which indicates the influences of three components of cultural competences on personal multicultural understanding and the application of this on developing professional competence. Three components of cultural competences consist of (a) awareness of attitudes – an understanding of how personal awareness of cultural conditioning affects personal beliefs, (b) knowledge – an understanding of the existence of cultural differences among individuals and groups, and (c) skills – the use of appropriately cultural intervention and communications skills (Sue, 2001, p.798). This three-domain division has been initially categorized by Helms and Richardson (1997) in their publication and then was updated into a 3x4x5 matrix by Sue (2001), shown in the below figure.

Therefore, the core question is **to which extent these overseas exchange program benefit students under the influences of affective learning?**

- To which extent this overseas exchange program creates an affective learning environment?
- To which extent the change in location and education system triggers the self-reflection?
- To which extent people develop professional competence in terms of awareness of attitude, knowledge, and skills differently when they experience self-reflection gained from the exchange program?

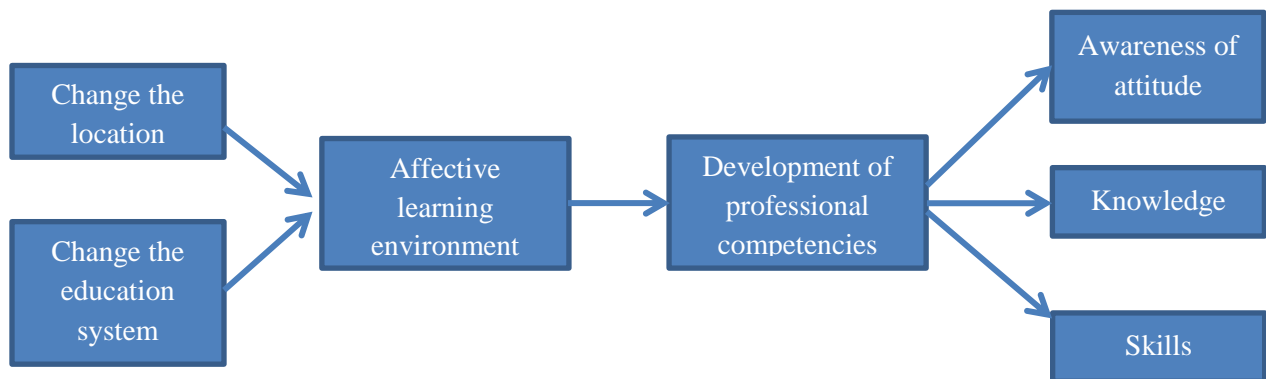


Figure 1: *Model of How the Overseas Exchange Program Benefit Students under the Influences of Affective Learning (Source: Own Developed By Researchers)*

Aim of this research:

- To understand the influences of the exchange program, have on the process of self-reflection of students

- To explore the effectiveness of exchange program in developing cultural awareness and professional competencies in higher education

The answers to these questions are important because an effective studying design at higher education is strongly linked to how students perceive professional competence and develop their global competencies accordingly. Moreover, the design of cultural training through exchange program and its effectiveness also link to how students perceive the expertise of the academic institutional provider.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Competence and Its Significant Roles in Communication and Cooperation

Cultural competence has been defined as “a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies” that enables individuals, groups, and organisations work effectively in cross-culture situations (Cross et al., 1989). In other words, cultural competency relates to the individual’s ability to recognize differences among cultures and interact consciously with persons belonging to different cultures. Lack of cultural knowledge might result in improper diagnoses, leading to misunderstanding and conflict in communication and lack of active compliances accordingly (Faison & Mintzer, 2005). Not to be mentioned, Opolka et al. (2004) also highlight the importance of understanding cultural competence in avoiding social resistance. Therefore, mastering in cultural competency will help improve both customer-service provider relationships, which are essential in hospitality industry (Waugh, et al., 2016).

To effectively work in cross-cultural situation, one needs to be not only aware of cultural differences but also willing to actively and continually acquire knowledge and skills needed to effectively communicate, interact, and negotiate with people of diverse ethno-cultural groups (Sue, 2001).

2.2 Hospitality – The Rising of International Operation Trend

Tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world as international tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000, and 1,235 million in 2016. (UNWTO, 2017). Furthermore, according to this latest report, global tourism also plays a key driver of the global economy when one in 10 jobs is in travel and tourism. Being a significant and integral role in tourism industry, hospitality sector is also on the

rise. As Wang & Wang (2009), once, has stated that “the hospitality industry is thus at the very core of the globalization of international business”; and “globalization impacts the hospitality industry dramatically because it influences the extent of which people travel both within the country and around the world”. In order to grow and to compete, therefore, companies within the industry must not only extend their business beyond their national boundaries but also look for people who are able to work in such multicultural, diverse and complex environment.

2.3 Multi-Cultural Competence Framework - The Need to Initiate Real Cultural Learning Experience

Sue (2001, p.799) has developed a multiple cultural competence framework which consists of three dimensions, consists of (a) race and culture-specific, (b) components of cultural competence, and (c) Foci of cultural competence.

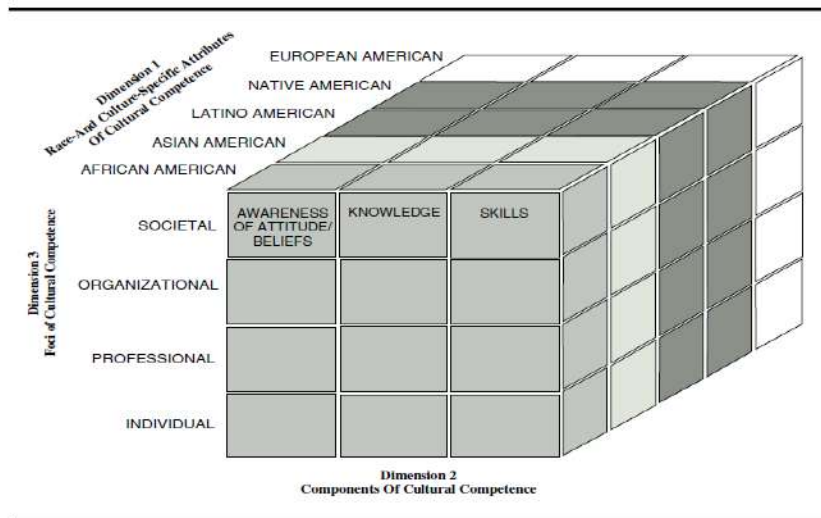


Figure 2: A Multidimensional Model for Developing Cultural Competence – (Source: Sue, 2001, P.799)

Dimension 1: Race and culture-specific attributes to cultural competence

According to Sue (2001), although most psychologists face problems in dealing with racial differences in understanding human’ behaviour; the studies relating to races, group cultures and their influences on human behaviour remains limited. It is claimed that people belonging to different races, under the influences of cultural and historical context, might interpret and perceive things differently (Sue, 2001). In educational training, differences in races and group cultures might positively affect students’ definition of professional competence and their priorities as well as ways in developing needed competences. Thus, acknowledging the

importance of race and the existence of many cultural groups and their behaviours which are shaped by their culture, ethnicity, social class, and genders will enhance multicultural understanding and sensitivity (Sue, 2001).

However, this acknowledgement cannot be achieved if one views cultural differences at the universal and individual levels without any focus on group influences (Sue, 2001, p.793, figure 1). Indeed, all individuals share common similarities since they all belong to “Homo Sapiens” level, including (a) biological and physical functions, (b) common life experiences (love, birth, hate, death, happiness, scare, and others), (c) self-awareness, and (d) ability to express personal feeling through body language. Moreover, at the individual level, human are also naturally different from each other due to differences in genetic system and personal instinctive. Moreover, under the influences of many shared and non-shared experiences in life, individuals might develop their own uniqueness. This explains why even twin, who share similar genetic system, might have differences in their personalities and behaviour since they might experience several non-shared events in life.

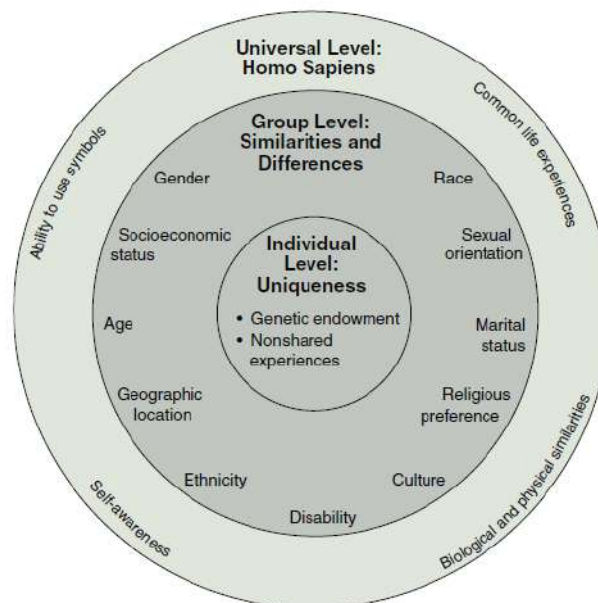


Figure 3: *Tripartite Framework of Personal Identity (Source: Sue, 2001, p.793)*

However, according to White (2010), individuals, who are accepted by and interacted in a group or a community, will normally share similar behaviour, beliefs, institutions, and others. Under the strong influences of social, political, economic, and cultural practices, members of a group form their perception and beliefs, which affect their viewpoint to themselves and to that of

others. Having different way of defining individual differences at group level, Sue (2001) classifies group culture in term of fixed and non-fixed indicators. While fixed factors imply for race, gender, ability/ disability, and age; non-fixed indicators might relate to education, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and marital status. Among these factors, sexual orientation remains debated of whether it is unchanged or fluid. Indeed, Hofstede, a well-known researcher for national culture, has confirmed the influences of national differences have on the population’s shared habits, tradition, values, norms, beliefs and identities.

Hence, accepting that geographic location, education, and other fluid variables which belong to group level do have strong influences on how people perceive things, think, give meaning, and interact with each other, the core question is **“Do people define professional competence differently when they move to live, study, and socialize in other location?”**

Dimension 2: Components of cultural competence

Sue et al. (1982) has developed a cultural competence framework which has then become a landmark in the field of cultural competence and has been used as instruments and guidelines for many researches. This framework consists of three components, including (a) awareness of attitudes – an understanding of how personal awareness of cultural conditioning affects personal beliefs, (b) knowledge – an understanding of the existence of cultural differences among individuals and groups, and (c) skills – the use of appropriately cultural intervention and communications skills (Figure 3, Helms and Richardson, 1997; Sue et al., 1982 and Sue, 2001).

Table 1: *Components of Cultural Competence – Adapted From D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & Mcdavis (1992)*

Belief/ Attitude	Knowledge	Skill
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aware and sensitive to own heritage and valuing/ respecting differences. 2. Aware of own background/experiences and biases and how they influence psychological processes. 3. Recognizes limits of competencies and expertise. 4. Comfortable with 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has knowledge of own racial/cultural heritage and how it affects perception. 2. Possesses knowledge about racial identity development. Able to acknowledge own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. 3. Knowledgeable about own social impact and communication styles. 4. Knowledgeable about group one works or interacts with. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeks out educational, consultative, and multicultural training experiences. 2. Seeks to understand self as racial/cultural being. 3. Familiarizes self with relevant on racial/ethnic groups. 4. Involved with minority groups, outside of work roles: community events, celebrations, neighbours,

<p>differences that exist between themselves and others.</p> <p>5. In touch with negative emotional reactions toward racial/ethnic groups and can be non-judgmental.</p> <p>6. Aware of stereotype and preconceived notions.</p> <p>7. Respects religious and/or spiritual beliefs of others.</p> <p>8. Respects indigenous helping practices and community networks.</p> <p>9. Values bilingualism.</p>	<p>5. Understands how race/ethnicity affects personality formation, vocational choices, psychological disorders, and so forth.</p> <p>6. Knows about socio-political influences, immigration, poverty, powerlessness, and so forth.</p> <p>7. Understands culture-bound, class-bound, and linguistic features of psychological help.</p> <p>8. Knows the effects of institutional barriers.</p> <p>9. Knows bias of assessment.</p> <p>10. Knowledgeable about minority family structures, community, and so forth.</p> <p>11. Knows how discriminatory practices operate at a community level.</p>	<p>and so forth.</p> <p>5. Able to engage in a variety of verbal/nonverbal helping styles.</p> <p>6. Can exercise interventional skills on behalf of clients.</p> <p>7. Can seek consultation with traditional healers</p> <p>8. Can take responsibility to provide linguistic competence for clients.</p> <p>9. Has expertise in cultural aspects of assessment.</p> <p>10. Works to eliminate bias, prejudice, and discrimination.</p> <p>11. Educates clients in the nature of one's practice.</p>
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In term of *belief and attitude*, cultural competence associates with the ability to understand one's own cultural conditions, which influence their beliefs, values and attitudes (Sue et al., 1992). Whereas, in term of *knowledge*, cultural competence associates with the ability to know the existence of differences relating to expectations, communication styles, working style, assessment, learning styles, and so forth. Alternatively, in term of *skill*, cultural competence associates with the activeness in seeking multicultural training experiences, involving in minority groups outside of work role, deliver proper intervention and consultation for clients (Sue et al., 1992).

Table 2: *Component 1 - Belief/Attitude – an understanding of one's own cultural conditioning that affects personal beliefs, values, and attitudes - Adapted from D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis (1992)*

Understanding about Belief/Attitude	Descriptions
Toward own heritage, background and experiences	Aware and sensitive to own heritage and valuing/respecting differences
	Aware of own background/experiences and biases and how they influence psychological processes
	Aware of stereotypes and preconceived notions

Toward competencies and expertise	Recognizes limits of competencies and expertise
Toward differences	Comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and others
Toward negative emotional reactions	In touch with negative emotional reactions toward radical/ethnic groups and can be nonjudgmental
Toward religion and beliefs of others	Respects religious and/or spiritual beliefs of others
	Respects indigenous helping practices and community networks
Toward bilingualism	Values bilingualism

Table 3: *Component 2: Knowledge Component – Understanding and Knowledge of the Worldviews of Culturally Different Individuals and Groups - Adapted From D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & Mcdavis (1992)*

Your knowledge	Descriptions
Own cultural heritage	Has knowledge of own racial/cultural heritage and how it affects perceptions
Own racial identity development	Possesses knowledge about racial identity development Able to acknowledge own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings
Own social impact & communication styles	Knowledgeable about own social impact and communications styles
Groups of interaction	Knowledgeable about groups one works or interacts with
Personality formation, vocational choices	Understands how race/ethnicity affects personality formation, vocational choices, psychological disorders, and so forth.
Sociopolitical influences, immigration, poverty, powerlessness	Knows about sociopolitical influences, immigration, poverty, powerlessness, and so forth.
Culture-bound, class-bound	Understands culture-bound, class-bound, and linguistic features of psychological help
	Knows the effects of institutional barriers
	Knows bias of assessment
	Knowledgeable about minority family structures, community, and so forth.
	Knows how discriminatory practices operate at a community level.

Table 4: *Component 3 - Skills: Use of Culturally Appropriate Intervention/Communication Skills - Adapted From D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & Mcdavis (1992)*

Your skills	Descriptions
	Seeks out educational, consultative, and multicultural training experiences
	Seeks to understand self as racial/cultural being
	Familiarizes self with relevant research on racial/ethnic groups
	Involved with minority groups outside of work role: community events, celebrations, neighbours, and so forth
	Able to engage in a variety of verbal/nonverbal helping styles

	Can exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of clients
	Can seek consultation with traditional healers
	Can take responsibility to provide linguistic competence for clients
	Has expertise in cultural aspects of assessment
	Works to eliminate bias, prejudice, and discrimination
	Educates clients in the nature of one's practice

Dimension 3: Foci of Cultural Competence

Developing multicultural competence requires the changes in perception not only from individual but also from group and the universal level. However, obstacles exist at all levels, which hinder the development of cultural competence. According to Sue (2001), at the *individual level*, the obstacles often associate with biases, prejudices, and misinformation, which then lead to racist discrimination. Indeed, individuals often resist to change their perception as a result of the preferences for habit and inertia (Piderit, 2007). Sue (1999) has summarized four main obstacles which block the development of cultural competence, including (a) people are used to consciously perceive and experience themselves and their actions as right and fair, (b) resistance to discuss publicly about racial prejudices, stereotyping, and discrimination, (c) afraid to take responsibility for any action and inaction relating to the potential perpetuation of injustice, and (d) avoid to deal with emotional unpleasantness and fear which might associate with painful racial experiences. At the *group or national level*, the obstacles might relate to culture-bound and monocultural definition of ethnocentric standards and its ethical codes.

2.4 Suggestion for Overcoming Individual Resistance to Cultural Competence

Four major obstacles as described above not only block people from being open but also prevent them from attaining cultural competence. Hence, several researchers have proposed activities and trainings that foster the positive changes, including Carter (1995), Helms (1995), Sabnani et al. (1991), and Sue (2001). These researchers share some principles in common. Firstly, knowledge of people derives from message gained from media, schools, their families and friends which might be biased and misinterpreted in which individuals must acquire accurate information from as many sources as possible to enhance the validity of information (Sue, 1999). Secondly, interacting with healthy and strong representatives of different cultures might help balancing the assumption and understanding. Thirdly, in order to recognize and value culture differences, one is suggested to spend time to gain real living and interaction experiences with people of that culture. Finally, individuals have to be put in the situation which their thoughts or

bias have to constantly vigilant manifest. This in turn requires individuals to confront cultural differences and change their worldview accordingly (Smith, 2012).

Based on the above four principles, despite of being continually trained about multiculturalism in workshop and classroom, gaining personal growth experiences in the real living and working environment is needed to trigger the self-reflection and learning process. Hence, this leads to the question of “To which extent the changes in location and education system as well as real social interaction trigger the self-reflection?”

3. Methodology

In term of research methodology, qualitative research approach has been appropriately used in this research to examine and extend the insights, including the application of “theory elaboration”, interpretive stance, and in-depth interview.

Firstly, “theory exploration” approach is selected as the pre-existing idea and preliminary models are available which help drive the research design. Indeed, in this study, researchers base the discussion on the existing mode of the Components of cultural competence of Sue et. al. theory. Secondly, interpretive stance is adopted to examine different meanings held by different persons and groups towards cultural awareness and development and the implications that cultural exchange program helped in developing cultural diversity awareness and sensitivity as well as the development of professional and interpersonal skills. Thirdly, in-depth interview with four different students who had cultural exchange experiences in hospitality training in different countries, including Finland, Belgium, and France. This approach is suitable since it enables the examination of contextual factors have on the effects of cultural diversity on the students.

The core motivation of qualitative research derives from its discovery-oriented approach which allows researchers explore the phenomenon where little understanding is available (Stake, 2010). Instead of following the set paradigm in order to test hypotheses, social researchers focus on exploring opinion of interviewee rather than meaning that researchers bring to the research (Creswell, 2013).

Moreover, having more flexibility in interpreting meaning, qualitative research might enable the understanding of complicated phenomenon, especially relating to social studies (Creswell, 2007). Indeed, social researchers often build up research ideas from experiences getting from their understanding of human crises and dilemmas (Padgett, 2016).

Table 5: Open Coding - Source: Own Developed By Researchers

G1	Repetitions & regularities	Repetition based coding. Repetitions of significantly repeated ideas to be shared by the actors suggest useful concepts used as a basis to develop potential nodes. NVivo10 function of Word Frequency, Word Cloud, Tree Map, Cluster Analysis	Inductive coding strategies	Cooking
G2	Capturing actual expressions	Codes are derived directly from the data from the process of capturing actual expression of the actors (Strauss, 1987). NVivo10's function of code description helps to record the progress of code construction until its final name.	Inductive coding strategies	
G3	Exploring discourse	Exploring discourse reflecting a particular construction of society, of an ecosystem and of the topic. The responses from hotel management to guest reviews could be discourse-based explored in order to answer such questions as which factors have led to the constructions? What are the implications of seeing the world in this ways? (Willig, 2003 and Wodak, 2004).	Inductive coding strategies	
G4	Using a priori categories	Using a priori categories embedded in research questions, literature reviews & readings to sensitize concepts, but not to confine development of thinking with fixed categories.	Deductive coding strategies	Extract information from the interview into theories
G5	Using Questions *	Use Questions of who, what, when, why, how, how much, with what results, what for, and what if to generate codes, to develop relational statement, and to ensure thoroughness of coding. Using questions also to identify whether the actions or strategies change or not under different conditions and, if so, what are the implications.	Inductive & Deductive coding strategies	
G6	Compare & Contrast	Compare & contrast passage of text with each other or with extreme examples in similarity and difference in order to discern and notice the dimensions within concepts and discern previously unobserved variables throughout the text.	Inductive & Deductive coding strategies	
G7	Using narrative structure & mechanisms	Taking into consideration of how things were said and what was said to identify transitions and turning points, to signify a change of theme or a subject to be avoided.	Inductive & Deductive coding strategies	
G8	Using	Using a way of describing something by	Inductive	

	metaphors & analogies	referring to it as something different and suggesting that it has similar qualities to that thing [Longman dictionary]	& Deductive strategies	
*Questions also used to develop a theoretical model				

Data from interview were firstly transcribed and entered in the Excel sheet, then conducted manually by Excel sheet by team members. The relevant chunks from the transcribed data were granted pre-set nodes in order for them to be grouped and processed subsequently (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Charmaz, 2006 & Singh, 2015). During the coding of the initial interviews, a node was created to represent instances where the data described the cultural adaptation process by the exchange students under investigation as the focus of interest is to understand how they develop knowledge of cultural beliefs, positive attitudes and communication ability as well as the formation of new belief, culturally appropriate behaviors and a sense of belonging to the actual context.

At the first level of interpretation, the practice of “*multiple codes*” provides an invaluable way to review each component code independently when these multiple codes are used simultaneously to enable certain perspective on each concept a chance of re-contextualization (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). Identification and assigning names for codes are another essential tasks to be conducted by the analyst to turn verbatim data into developed nodes or multiple codes from initial coding process. Various ways of coding should be collected in order to support the transformation of verbatim textual data into the research nodes. A collection of ways in coding suggested has been adopted by this research as various useful generators of codes for the purpose of identifying and assigning name for nodes. The following Figures provide a description of the code generators using inductive coding strategies and the process conducted using inductive coding strategies in which verbatim data of interview have been initially coded into the nodes.

Table 6: *Adapted From Miles and Huberman (1994); Charmaz (2006), Singh (2015) & Bazeley and Jackson (2013)*

Case	Verbatim data sample	Generator of codes	Nodes or Multiple codes	Notes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To behave more carefully with others Avoid making jokes about love with Chinese 	Using a priori categories (G4)	Cultural sensitivity	Belief/ Attitude
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The confidence of international students is not only derived from their 	Using a priori categories	Competencies formation	Belief

	fluency in speaking but also from their vast knowledge background → responded to all situation very fast → derived from reading culture	(G4)	awareness	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned from experienced lecturers with diversified industry experience, wide culture background: Marketing, Networking, Risks management, Social Responsibility, Chinese, and Marketing Game with simulation to enhance the learning experience Aware that in the new environment has more realistic learning environment → develop professional skills Case studies are necessary for students to practice solving problems 	Questions of who, when, how much, with what results, and what for (G5)	Occupational belief/ attitude improvement	Belief
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously did not like to communicate with color people but I changed my perception after getting to know closely with others Group-work: Vietnamese often kept the conflict by themselves without solving it directly in the group. people with limitation in English would team up together & less confidence in communication I thought that all European people are the same, but then when I directly contacted, I found out that every nation is different → when talking with one European, I should ask where they come from to find the best possible approach of interaction Realize that Vietnamese often are afraid of self-exploration without friends → lack of confidence to travel to new places Because of my accent so someone did not understand Racism between indigenous Caucasians with Asian youngsters 	Using a priori categories (G4)	Cultural barrier understanding	Knowledge
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civilized lifestyle: social order, queuing life skills: balancing budget by comparing prices of items Become more mature: know how to 	Repetitions & regularities (G1)	Interpersonal skills development	Skills

	<p>cook, to care more for myself, more self-discipline, do not rely on parents and friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became more open-minded • Set some short-term plans for the future that never done before. • Habits of reading • Learning the importance of creating and keeping relationships with others • knowing the reasons for such failure or success of every business 			
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ability to use local English without spending too much time on thinking appropriate speaking ways ○ Ability to read English materials ○ Ability to write reports ○ Confident to do presentations in front of experts • Group work skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more responsible for all the teamwork activities ○ Learn to listen in group ○ More active in group work 	Repetitions & regularities (G1)	Adaptive Skills	Skills
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a birthday party for the unfortunate children of the city • arranged to go out with each other • Love to organise sharing section in Vietnam to share experiences about what they had spent and what they had learnt through the trip so that the people who want to go will get the picture before-hand • Welcome an international friend to Vietnam • told international friends about how Vietnamese people organize Lunar New Year • Instruct friends how to use chopstick • Introduce Vietnamese culture through cooking local foods 	Questions of who, when, how much, with what results, and what for (G5)	Cultural sharing initiatives and involvement	Skills

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Identification of cultural-specific attributes of cultural competence (Sue, 2001)

How different cultural groups define cultural competence similar to or different from one another

How to build and maintain a true collaborative partnership with peers and faculty in and outside the classroom

Confirm or not and to what extent the indication of MDCC model of multidimensional model of cultural competence (Sue, 2001) that cultural competence for one group is not necessarily the same for another group, from the personal perspective of the exchange students

4.2 Organization and enhancement of educational efforts with focus on skills training and development

The effects of intercultural experience in stretching out of students' comfort zones to better understand their own culture, themselves, and the other's culture

4.3 Awareness level of exchange students based on issues related to mis/understanding and mis/communications among different foci of cultural competence as individual, professional, organizational, and societal level

Awareness of turning points in understanding cross-cultural differences

Creation of a linkage between high quality cross-cultural experiences and well-ready preparation of the students' future career path development

4.4 Integrating cultural intelligence and global business orientation into a framework of global mindset (Story and Barbuto, 2011)

Belief to live in a satisfying manner within both cultures has been formulated by exchange students. They have learnt the confidence about mastering the varied demands of these cultures that can lead to a successful life in a cross-cultural context, as conceptualized by LaFromboise et al., (1993) and Omizo, Kim, and Abel (2008) as bicultural efficacy.

“The confidence of international students is not only derived from their fluency in speaking but also from their vast knowledge background that is responded to all situation very fast and is derived from reading culture”

Some of them also recorded individuals' expectations to be able to successfully perform a particular desired behavior, as described by Bandura (1977) as general self-efficacy. Their

occupational belief and attitude improvement have associated with a sense of being grounded in both cultures.

“Learned from experienced lecturers with diversified industry experience, wide culture background: Marketing, Networking, Risks management, Social Responsibility, Chinese, and Marketing Game with simulation to enhance the learning experience or to aware that in the new environment, it has more realistic learning environment that is able to develop professional skills. And case studies are necessary for students to practice solving problems”

Adaptive skills in communication have been developed with the willingness to flexibly adapt in any given situation and enhanced level of self-efficacy in practicing this flexibility. According to Martin and Rubin (1995) and Omizo, Kim, and Abel (2008), the personal cognition is highly associated with the mental processes that precede an individual’s choice of exercise flexibility in communication and social situations in terms of cognitive flexibility. In this study, two main groups of skill adaptation have been emerged as communication skills and group work skills: *“ability to use local English without spending too much time on thinking appropriate speaking ways; ability to read English materials; ability to write reports, confident to do presentations in front of experts; more responsible for all the teamwork activities and learn to listen in group as well as more active in group work”*. They all express effective communication ability in a cross-cultural context.

The levels of cultural adaptation and retention to the norms and values have been modified via various contact points. They share different cultures with their first-hand contact persons. As a result, subsequent changes occur in the original culture traits and patterns of both interacting groups. These changes have gradually become positive precursor to influence the development of bicultural competence described by LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) in which the exchange students abroad can adhere to the norms and values of their original and dominant cultures, and then be able to successfully meet the demands of two cultures. Different courses of action have been generated from exchange students in their natural effort to connect culturally with their friends in abroad *“ Organize a birthday party for the unfortunate children of the city; arranged to go out with each other; love to organize sharing section in Vietnam to share experiences about what they had spent and what they had learnt through the trip so that the people who want to go will get the picture before-hand; welcome an international friend to Vietnam; told international friends about how Vietnamese people organize Lunar New Year;*

Instruct friends how to use chopstick; and introduce Vietnamese culture through cooking local foods”.

Classification Label of Nodes

The code generators were created as the assistants for the researcher to carry out certain coding strategy with the purpose of identifying and assigning name for initial nodes (Figure 4.2). The initial coding decisions are based on the problem areas grounded directly from data, but not on a preconceived theoretical framework that has been well developed from literature (Coyne, 1997). The identified nodes from the coding process were further grouped into broader classification labels that were developed in the research framework as illustrated below. As the containers for the coding, when nodes are gathered in one place so that the researcher can look for emerging patterns and ideas in preparation for themes identification.

Table 7: Classification Label of Nodes – Source: Own Developed by Researchers

Nodes	Transcoder	Descriptions of transcoder	Classification Labels
<i>Cultural sensitivity</i>	<i>Variations on target phenomenon</i>	<i>A priori decisions to have representative coverage of variables likely to be important in understanding how diverse factors configure as a whole.</i>	Transformation of Cultural competencies
<i>Cultural barrier understanding</i>	<i>Variations on target phenomenon</i>	<i>A priori decisions to have representative coverage of variables likely to be important in understanding how diverse factors configure as a whole.</i>	
<i>Cultural sharing initiatives and involvement</i>	<i>Variations on target phenomenon</i>	<i>A priori decisions to have representative coverage of variables likely to be important in understanding how diverse factors configure as a whole.</i>	
<i>Competencies formation awareness</i>	<i>Variations on maximum</i>	<i>Decisions on kinds of variation to maximize and when to maximize each kind</i>	Professionally adaptive skills
<i>Adaptive Skills</i>	<i>Variations on</i>	<i>Decisions on kinds of variation to maximize and when to maximize each</i>	

	<i>maximum</i>	<i>kind</i>	
<i>Occupational belief/ attitude improvement</i>	<i>Variations on a theoretical construct</i>	<i>Decisions on variations employed to fully elaborate and validate theoretically derived variations discerned in the data.</i>	Action Learning orientation
<i>Interpersonal skills development</i>	<i>Variations on target phenomenon</i>	<i>A priori decisions to have representative coverage of variables likely to be important in understanding how diverse factors configure as a whole.</i>	Transformation of personal development

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

It would be highly recommended that pre-trip training should be offered for exchange students before entering the programs in abroad, especially to discuss about goal setting and appropriate courses of actions with students. Then, it is also important to follow-up the implementation of these goals and performance of actions via their various contact points of their cultural interaction to evaluate the levels of cultural adaptation and retention. The adherence of norms and values accumulated from the built-in exchange process could be positive precursors for their affected beliefs about future professional competence and goals.

Given the actual cross-cultural context that requires effective intercultural communication at the same time with inherent cultural barrier in gaining mutual understanding, the exchange students should stand in development area with optimal level of challenge. According to the anxiety/uncertainty management theory developed by Gudykunst (1995), it is suggested that effective intercultural communication require a balance between our minimum and maximum thresholds of uncertainty involving knowledge and predictability and our anxiety involving emotional disequilibrium. The exchange program collaborators should then, integrate various good practices of cultural competence to advise students the optimal level of challenge.

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