

The Influence on International Perspective to Intercultural Effectiveness in Taiwan

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Abstract

The study first summarizes about the definition of “international perspective” and “intercultural”, then collect and analyze the literatures and structure theoretical foundation. This study focused on the international students and Taiwanese students, the research designed the questionnaire from the focus group interview. After that, the study recalled all questionnaire to conduct the analysis, and investigate the impact of students' international perspective to intercultural effectiveness. This study also compared international students and Taiwan student's international perspective and intercultural effectiveness. Several factors of international perspective and intercultural effectiveness had been defined in this study, which are international experiences, international theory and information, as well as international qualifications the factors of international perspective. Perception and cognition, emotion and attitude, behavior and skill, knowledge and comprehension from the intercultural effectiveness session. The result proved that there is a receivable impact between international perspective and intercultural effectiveness.

Keywords: International perspective, intercultural, intercultural effectiveness

1. Introduction

In the past few years, there has been abundance of relevant researches focusing on the concept of international perspective of enterprise. However, there has been very little research reported on the concept of international perspective from individual perspectives. Most of the past researches were mainly focusing on the international perspective of enterprise such marketing entry strategies, international market management and international strategies. “International talents” are the qualities possessed by a person who has been internationalized while “cross-cultural efficiency” refers to the required ability to adapt to new environments and the skills to deal with different cultures (Han, 1997).

2. Literature Review

(1) Related Definitions of Intercultural Effectiveness

According to Yan (2014), Deardorff theory (2006) is the most widely cited theory which has been used by 23 well-known scholars. Deardorff theory (2006) claimed that cross-cultural competency is based on individual's cross-cultural knowledge, skills and attitude. The ability to apply efficient and appropriate communication skills in new environments indicates higher level of cross-cultural competency. However, Ang et al. (2007) and Trompenaars and Woolliams (2009) argued that intercultural competency should include the notion of respect, compromising and understanding from both parties of different cultural backgrounds.

To sum up, the term “cross-cultural efficacy” is ambiguous and definitions vary depending on the contexts. However, there are still some similarities. Most scholars have proposed that communication skill and interactivity are the key elements to define cross-cultural efficacy. In order to achieve cross-cultural efficacy, an individual should possess the combined quality of appropriate behavior, attitude, knowledge, skills and effective communication skills. This study suggests that cross-cultural effectiveness refers to the ability to communicate, experience, and interact effectively with other to achieve cross-cultural efficacy.

(2) Theoretical Framework of Intercultural Effectiveness

After organizing the information from past researches, this study divides intercultural effectiveness into four aspects.

- I. “Communication and adaptation” encompasses the communication between others and how to adapt someone to others different culture.
- II. “Learning and acceptance” comprises of the perception towards different culture, confrontation skills and motives. When an individual encounters culture shock, the action taken reflects the person’s emotional and attitude expression. The learning of different language to adapt culture different.
- III. “Interaction” refers to the appropriate action and skills taken by an individual when one acknowledges the difference in culture. How someone interact with others to encounter the change of language and culture in a different circumstance.
- IV. “Culture cognition” includes cognitive of knowing the meaning of culture difference and the meaning of culture.

(3) Definitions of International Perspective

The term “world-mindedness” was the earliest term used by many scholars, and later “global-mindedness” was being introduced by Hatt (1993). However, these two terms have the same definition. According to early scholars Sampson and Smith (1957), the meaning of world-mindedness emphasizes more on the global view of humanity issues rather than the related knowledge of international perspective and interest in global views. While some recent scholars argued that those who have world-mindedness have their own ideas and perspectives. This is because they have been exposed to the outside world and have greater acceptance towards different cultures. Thence, the definition of world-mindedness from scholars of different generation has not much disparity.

In conclusion, this study suggests that the definition of world-mindedness refers to equality, which means every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their live and talents regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. The connotation of equality is not being mentioned in the term “internationalization” and “globalization”, while the human rights are the key elements in “world-mindedness” term. “internationalization” focuses more on the level of cognition; “globalization” is being defined as interconnectedness between countries; while the definition of “world-mindedness” refers to the humanity issues. Despite the key factors of these three terms are different, but the definition of these terms unanimously agree that humans should be treated equally regardless of boundaries, race, religion and beliefs. In this research, international perspective is the only suitable term used to explain the objective of this study. Therefore, this study suggests that the definition of international perspective refers to the understanding of oneself and people from different cultural groups, and unselfishly accept and tolerate other people’s ideas and views.

3. Methodology

(1) Research Framework

Figure of research framework as shown in Figure 1. Research hypotheses as shown below:

- H1: International perspective is positively related to intercultural effectiveness.
- H2: International students’ international perspective is positively related to intercultural effectiveness.
- H3: Taiwanese students’ international perspective is positively related to intercultural effectiveness.
- H4: There are significant differences between international students’ and Taiwanese students’ intercultural effectiveness.

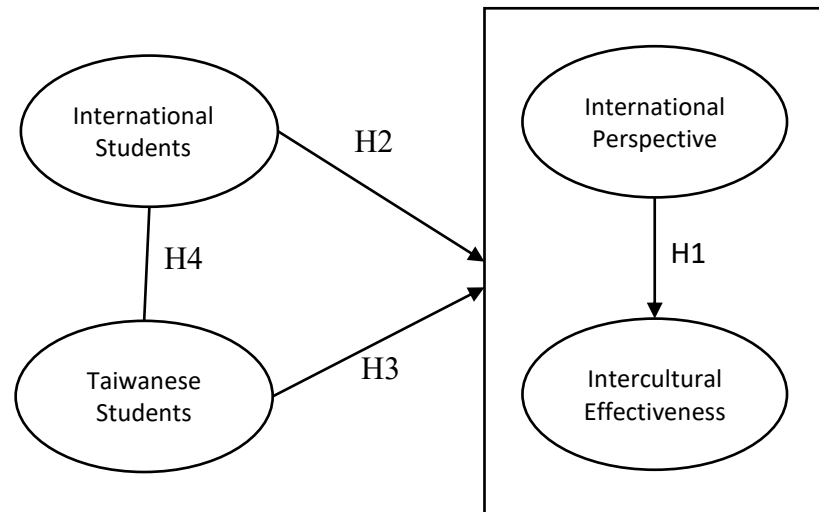


Figure 1 Research Framework

(2) Operational Definition

I. Intercultural Effectiveness

The definition of intercultural effectiveness is referring to the ability to communicate, experience, and interact effectively with other to achieve intercultural effectiveness.

II. International Perspective

The definition of international perspective refers to the understanding of oneself and people from different cultural groups, and unselfishly accept and tolerate other people's ideas and views.

(3) Respondents

As this study takes into international perspective and intercultural issues, so before the formal distribution of questionnaires, focus group interviews have been held to collect the research data. The content of interview data has been analysis by imitated the critical incident technique (CIT) in learning analysis principles. At last the result of the analysis will be used to design the questionnaire. Therefore, the respondents of the study divide in to the focus group interview respondents and the questionnaire survey respondents.

The respondents of focus group interview in this study are divided into two categories, which are international students and Taiwanese students. Each session will include 5-8 students, and two sessions will be interviewing the international students and two sessions will be interviewing the Taiwanese students.

A total of 600 questionnaires were issued, of which 300 were distributed to international students and 300 were distributed to Taiwanese students for investigation. International students and Taiwanese students are expected to collect 200 questionnaires for analysis.

(4) Questionnaire Design

This study had decided to conduct focus group interview to collect in-depth data from selected respondents. During the focus group interview, questions were being asked in reference to Han's (1997) intercultural questionnaire. The outline was designed in accordance to the researches of Hayden, Rancic, and Thompson (2000) as well as Sampson and Smith (1957). Aside from that, the design of questionnaire was designed and extended based on past articles about international perspective and intercultural effectiveness. Then, the focus group interviews were conducted among students from different cultural groups and the duration of each interview was more than 1.5 hours. Five students were allocated into each group, one group was consisted of international students who are currently pursuing their studies in Taiwan while another group was consisted of Taiwanese students.

(5) Narrative analysis

From the data collected from the focus group interview, researcher categorized a few themes and later decoded the meaning of it. Then, researcher modified the questionnaire in a way that is easier to comprehend by Asian students. After the classification of data into different themes, two researchers deployed the principle of intersubjective to carry out the process of coding. The method is discussing whether two different themes should be classified into a certain topic. After done coding, find the mutual agreement between the different coders to be 0.8, and then calculate the reliability to be up to 0.98 to show that both coders have unanimous decision. At the same time, this study required the two coders to choose the most representative language of 0 to 2 for the premonition of consent archives and select the mutual agreed representative language and finally combine it together. Then, researchers designed the representative language into a total of 21 Likert-type questionnaire.

(6) Questionnaire Pilot Study

In this study, a 7-day pre-survey questionnaire was collected from March 25 to March 31, 2017, and a total of 100 questionnaires were issued. After the pre-measured questionnaire were being collected, project analysis was being carried out to find out the results were significant, on behalf of the sub-item scale with the degree of identification and based on the results of the analysis, respondents filled the response and expert advice to modify the contents of the pre-measured questionnaire.

(7) Analysis Method

In this study analyse method that had been used were descriptive statistics analysis, item analysis and correlation analysis, factor analysis and reliability analysis, reliability and validity analysis, correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and SEM.

4. Results and Discussion

(1) Summary of Quantitative Results

Parts of the experiences told by those participants have been extract for the narrative analysis research. Examples of extract as shown above.

I. Extract Questions of International Perspective

Q1: I personally think that a person who has traveled abroad is more open minded.

Answer: ...having international experience will be more opening minded. People who have traveled abroad at least have seen something they have not seen before!

II. Extract Questions of Intercultural Effectiveness

Q2: I personally think that a person from different cultural group is willing to make changes to their behavior and habits to adapt with the cultural differences.

Answer: If (thought) open-minded they will, some will not, because some people have their own way of doing things. Some people are willing to make changes, it depends on the personality.

(2) Results of Reliability Analysis

After collecting back 96 valid questionnaires, this study carried out the SPSS reliability analysis, and the Cronbach α values were used to examine the factors, and their intrinsic consistency was good. Among all the results, the international concept of α value is 0.744; the value of intercultural α is 0.761. However, in the intercultural section of the eighth question, the reliability of this question is -0.083. After the title is been deleted, the total confidence in the intercultural issue will be raised to 0.838. After deleting this question, the Cronbach α values of the factors are mostly close to or greater than 0.7.

(3) Results of Factor Analysis

I. Analysis of the International Perspective

The results of factor analysis can be categorized into three main factors, the total variation is 65.940%.

Factor 1: This factor mainly focus on the actual experience of travelling abroad and accepting different cultures and information from various countries. This factor is being named as “International Experience”.

Factor 2: This factor mainly focuses on the behavior of respecting, understanding and accepting different cultures. This factor is being named as “International Culture and Information”.

Factor 3: This factor mainly focuses on the person who has had the experience of travelling abroad, and they usually have wider perspective on global issues. This factor is being named as “International Vision”.

II. Analysis of the Intercultural Effectiveness

According to KMO (0.801) and Bartlett test (<0.05) on intercultural effectiveness, the result of factor analysis was being shown. The result of factor analysis can be divided into four main factors. The total variation is 66.781%.

Factor 1: This factor is mainly focusing on the interactivity among foreign counterparts in terms of communication, and how one changes their behavior to adapt to new culture, which is being named as “Perception and Cognition”.

Factor 2: This factor is mainly focusing on the attitude of respecting different culture, and efficiently learning various languages from foreign counterparts to build interest about cultures from different countries. This factor is being named as “Emotion and Attitude”.

Factor 3: This factor is mainly focusing on the interactivity among foreign counterparts in order to achieve language learning and culture learning. This factor is being named as “Behavior and Skill”.

Factor 4: This factor is mainly focusing on the culture cognition, and the ability to acknowledge the differences in culture and the definition of culture. This factor is being named as “Knowledge and Comprehension”.

(4) Sample Variable Analysis and Background Variables Analysis

In this study, 1500 questionnaires were distributed and 1313 questionnaires were collected, with a total of 34 invalid questionnaires, 1279 effective questionnaires and 85.27% effective recoveries. On the analysis of background variables there is no differences were found on the gender group.

I. Differences Display in Background Variables Analysis of International Perspective

- A. Nationality: Provider groups that did display differences which are “International Experiences”, “International Culture and Information”, and “International Vision”. These groups all displayed the results of others nationality greater than Taiwanese.
- B. Age: In the group of “International Experiences”, the highest differences displayed was the group of ages 24> 25 and above> 21> 23> 22> 18> 17> 19. However, “International Culture and Information” shows the result of the highest group is age 24> 22> 17> 21> 23> 25 and above> 18> 20> 19. “International Vision” displayed the results of age 24>23>22> 21>25 and above >18>17>20>19.
- C. Affiliation: “International Experiences” displayed the highest results in the group of other affiliations> private affiliations> government affiliation. “International Culture and Information” display the results of government affiliation> private affiliations> other affiliations.
- D. Grade: “International Vision” results displayed other grades> grade four> grade one> grade three> grade two.
- E. Department: Three of the groups all shows that other departments had a significantly higher than hospitality department.

II. Differences Display in Background Variables Analysis of Intercultural Effectiveness

No differences were found on the gender group.

- A. Nationality: “Perception and Cognition”, “Emotion and Attitude”, “Behavior and Skill”, “Knowledge and Comprehension” all displayed the results of others nationality greater than Taiwanese.
- B. Age: “Perception and Cognition” displayed results 24> 23> 22> 25 and above> 21> 18> 20> 17> 19. “Emotion and Attitude” results show 25 and above> 24> 17> 23> 22> 21> 18> 20> 19. “Behavior and Skill” results indicated 24> 22> 17> 23> 21> 20> 25 and above> 18> 19. “Knowledge and Comprehension” displayed 24> 23> 25 and above> 22> 21> 20> 17> 18> 19.

- C. Affiliation: Provider group “Perception and Cognition” and “Behavior and Skill” shows results government affiliation> private affiliations> other affiliations.
- D. Grade: Only “Emotion and Attitude” shows differences between grade, which is other grades> grade four> grade two> grade three.
- E. Department: Four of the groups all displayed others department greater than hospitality department.

(5) Reliability and Validity Analysis

I. Reliability Analysis

The scale of this study referred to the proven questionnaire, the Intercultural Scale of Han (1997) and Hayden, Rancic, and Thompson (2000) and Sampson and Smith (1957). Focus group interview and narrative analysis are used in this study to produce the questionnaire.

II. Item Analysis

In this study, the reliability of project analysis is studied, and the Cronbach ' s value of individual items is greater than 0.7, so the display of each item has good reliability.

III. Validity Analysis

In this study, the Cronbach ' s coefficients were used to develop the individual reliability of each questionnaire. Both international perspective and intercultural effectiveness questionnaires and the aggregate table have more than 0.7 coefficients, which shows the reliability of the data in this study.

(6) Pearson Correlation Analysis

Both international perspective and intercultural effectiveness are positively correlated with each other, results show correlation coefficient is more than 0.5.

(7) Structural Equation Model

The standardized regression coefficient values between the various surfaces are significant, which is 0.95. It also can be verified that the international perspective has a highly significant response to intercultural effectiveness.

In the analysis of the measurement model, the potential variables of each surface and the factor load between the pointer variables are between 0.71 and 0.90, all of them archived the significant standard, and the result indicates that the quality in the mode is in a reasonable state. In addition, the results of the overall model fit indicated that the appropriateness of this research model is acceptable.

From analyzing the measurement model of international perspective, results proved that the four factors of international perspective have all achieved the index more than 0.78. The results interpreted that those factors are the most far-reaching of all in the international perspective dimension. The reason may be because these three factors are to support a person's international viewpoint strength. A person's life experience, the knowledge he received, information he knows about cultural and his vision, all of these will directly affect a person's international viewpoint.

On the other hand, from the measurement model of intercultural effectiveness, the factor perception and cognition is the most significant impact of all, the results showed the highest 0.90. The following factors are emotion and attitude and knowledge and comprehension, both shows score of 0.86. The reason may cause from the communication between others, adaptations of one's mental and physical to achieve the maximum intercultural effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

(1) Conclusions

This study is based on the expression of the student's language, words, and verbal to design and modify, to form a scale for the oriental culture language study environment. These questionnaires could help the future studies on international and intercultural effects can be measured more accurately and provide a complete and mature measurement questionnaire. In addition, through the discussion we have found out that students are being optimistic and open-minded for the factors of internationalization and intercultural effectiveness. These situation form may cause of the increase of international students all over the world that bring about the phenomena of having classmates from other cultures and countries is already not a surprising thing. Furthermore, international students are also upholding a respectful and understanding manners to each other.

I. Relationship Between Background Variable and International Perspective and Intercultural Effectiveness

A. Nationality

The results of the nationality show that foreign students, whether in aspect of international experience, international culture and information or international vision all presented greater results than the Taiwanese students, most likely it is because foreign students have experienced different cultural and environmental adaptation of life caused by the phenomenon.

B. Age and Grade

The results of this study resulted that the elder the age and grade of students, the higher the score of students' international perspective and intercultural effectiveness. This more likely because of as the age increases, the wider the students' visual field develops and grows. Intercultural researcher Fartini (2000,2007) did mentioned that the longer the time of exposure to international experience will affect one's depth of intercultural effectiveness.

C. Affiliations and Department

The study shows that the international perspective of students attending government schools is higher than private schools. This is because in Taiwan, the education resources of government schools received from the government, which are plenty more than the resources of private schools, and may cause one of the reasons for this particular situation.

As for the department variable, in this study only categories into hospitality management department and other departments, therefore the range of the sample number is too wide, so the students of other departments have a higher international perspective score than the hospitality management department.

II. Structural Equation Model

A. Impact of International Perspectives on Intercultural Effectiveness

From the test result of the structural equation model, the value of the international perspectives to the intercultural effectiveness is 0.95, which shows that international perspectives have a strong influence on intercultural effectiveness as a result. This shows that the international perspectives and intercultural effectiveness have an inextricably linked relationship. It embodies that the cultivation of international perspectives, which is closely related to intercultural effectiveness. The results of this study also achieved the purpose of this study and successfully explored the impact of international perspectives on intercultural effectiveness.

B. Factors of International Perspective

I. International Experiences

1994 Aerts had proposed that "world-mindedness" is a value direction (world view point), influenced by the different factors of knowledge (e.g. education) and personal experience and other factors (such as age, cultural background, gender and religion). All the theories put forward by these scholars verify that international experience is one of the factors of international perspectives.

II. International Culture and Information

Liu (2016) believes that the international perspective encompasses the ability to analyze and care for different regions of the world. Lin (1999) mentioned that international perspectives is an interpretation of the existence of this factor, which is composed of knowledge, self-restraint, attitude and vision. The results of the study showed that all three factors were consistent with the conclusion of this study.

III. International Vision

Chris Lau (2008) The professor said, "Learning a foreign language is important, it is important to having interest toward international affairs, international culture, but more importantly, there is a structure to analyze the international situation." This illustrated one of the factors of international perspective is related to international vision.

A. Factors of Intercultural Effectiveness

I. Perception and Cognition

The famous scholar Han (1997) and Deardroff (2006) put forward the important element of intercultural effectiveness is communication skills, and Hammer (1987) in the 80 's have proposed communication as an intercultural important factor too. And after this element, following with adaptation. Researchers points out that adaption is the mentality subsequent adjustment after communication, psychological and physical adaptation is closely related.

II. Emotion and Attitude

After perception and cognition, the next step is the emotion and attitude that simmer the intercultural effectiveness. By learning and repetition of difference culture environment, will cure one's emotion and adjust attitude, so that intercultural effectiveness will occur. Demangeot et al. (2013) suggested that intercultural effectiveness is an ability to understand, adapt and accommodate other cultures.

III. Behavior and Skill

Stone (2006) has suggested that intercultural effectiveness is the ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds in order to maximize the benefits of both parties. Knowledge and Comprehension

The results of the study show that all four factors are consistent with the viewpoints of this study and have demonstrated the importance and necessity of students' international perspective and intercultural effectiveness.

IV. Knowledge and Comprehension

Bikson, Trevereton, Moini & Lindstrom (2003) figured out that intercultural effectiveness factors include the understanding of cultural differences and how to use cultural knowledge in a multi-level way in usual life. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was recognized that cross-cultural awareness and knowledge was one of the factors of intercultural effectiveness.

(2) Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is only focus on the international students that are studying in Taiwan and local Taiwanese students, so the scope of application of the results are limited. However, due to the general application of this study and the diversity of international students' nationality, the questionnaire of this study can be applied to Asian countries. Several brand new factors of internationalization and intercultural effectiveness had been defined in this study.

I. Accuracy of Reliability and Validity Analysis

The validity of this study is only analyzed by the content analysis method, so the validity measurement can improve the reliability and validity if the expert interview is included.

II. Suggestion

The questionnaire of this study is mainly in Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean and Malay. Future researchers can design different language versions for the questionnaire to increase the language understanding and accuracy of the subjects.

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