



**Internationalisation and Students' Intercultural  
Competence Development**

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## Abstract

In response to marketisation agendas, a considerable body of research now focuses on more values-based and inclusive aspects of higher education (HE) internationalisation. Examples include concepts such as internationalisation at home, internationalisation of the curriculum and students' internationalised experiences. However, relatively little is known about intercultural competence (IC) as a learning outcome of HE internationalisation, and there is a lack of studies on different student cohorts regarding their IC development (e.g. students from different disciplines, home and international students).

The aim of this research was to (a) investigate student and staff perceptions of internationalisation on a 'home' campus, and (b) examine whether their international and intercultural experiences contribute to the development of IC. This study adopted a longitudinal mixed methods approach, including a two-stage self-report survey (October and May) and three rounds of semi-structured interviews (October, February, June). The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (i.e. MPQ) was used to measure students' IC development over time, while the interviews were designed to monitor students' intercultural experiences at three stages. In total, 227 students from three disciplines (Business, Education, and Engineering) took part in a pre- and post- survey. Fourteen students and five staff members participated in semi-structured interviews.

Findings revealed that staff from both 'soft' and 'hard' disciplines hold similar instructional beliefs, acknowledging the importance of international elements in their teaching and aiming to prepare their students with skills that enable them to work with colleagues from different cultural groups. On the other hand, students' attitudes towards their experience of internationalisation at the host university changed from positive towards less satisfied after nine months of studies. The study suggests that the degree of internationalisation at a university is not merely reflected in its number of international students (ISs) and the internationalised curriculum, but also in home and international students' social integration in and out of class.

Regarding students' IC development, findings indicated that although students mostly claimed that they became more open-minded and empathetic towards people from other cultural groups, those from the Engineering discipline demonstrated a significant decrease in open-mindedness (OM). This was mainly

related to having 'negative intergroup contact' resulting from working in mixed culture groups, lack of social contacts, or experiencing social segregation in and out of class. In addition, ISs showed a significant increase in flexibility (FL) over time. This indicates that ISs have become more adapted both academically and socio-culturally after a period of nine months of studying. The study informed a conceptual model of HE internationalisation that integrates the exploration of student and staff perceptions and experience (i.e. as a process) and the measurement of students' IC development (i.e. as a learning outcome).

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## Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
International Students (ISs)	Persons who need to 'cross a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin' (UNESCO, 2012).
Home Students	Those who are British citizens and have been previously educated in the UK in their early years and those who pay a lower rate of tuition fees.
Internationalisation of Higher Education (IoHE)	'Internationalisation is the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society' (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29)
Internationalisation at Home (IaH)	'It is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments' (Beelen & Jones, 2015, p.76)
Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC)	'It is the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study.' (Leask, 2015, p.69)
Intercultural Competence (IC)	'A complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself' (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006, p.12).
Open-mindedness (OM)	An open and unprejudiced attitude towards outgroup members and towards different cultural norms and values.
Cultural Empathy (CE)	The ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of members from the different cultural groups.
Social Initiative (SI)	Individuals have the tendency to approach social activities in an active way and take initiative.
Emotional Stability (ES)	The ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
Flexibility (FL)	The ability to switch easily from one thing to another because the familiar ways of dealing with things will not necessarily work in a new cultural environment.



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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Globalisation brings changes to many aspects of the world, including economic, social, political and cultural factors. This results in 'global competition, integration of markets, increasingly dense communication networks, information and people flows and mobility' (Reichert & Wachter, 2000). Therefore, a more interconnected and independent 'global village' has emerged (Knight, 2008). As an important agent in the process of globalisation, the higher education sector contributes to the flows of information, technology and people across the globe through teaching, learning and research (Yemini, 2014; Singh, 2011). In the 1990s, internationalisation gradually became a key component in higher education (HE), especially in Europe (Teichler, 2009). The United Kingdom, as the second most popular destination, attracts many international students every year. The tuition fees generated by international students have been regarded as an important contribution to higher education institutions' (HEIs) income to offset the decrease in UK government funding to HEIs. Hence, UK HE has become a market-driven business in the past few decades as stakeholders have striven to internationalise their institutions (Hudzik, 2011; Chaney, 2013). HEIs have been seen as significant economic actors, playing an essential role in local and national economic development.

In addition to the recognised economic contribution brought by international students, internationalisation of higher education (IoHE) also brings academic and socio-cultural benefits (de Wit, 2002). The academic rationale for HE internationalisation includes both the academic and social benefits for students that can result from the internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC). IoC aims to integrate international and intercultural elements to teaching, learning, and research and thereby to improve opportunities to develop intercultural awareness for all students and their ability to function responsibly in a global context. Regarding the socio-cultural rationale, IoC can contribute to 'personal development' (Kallen, 1991) through experiencing other cultures. Due to the academic and socio-cultural imperatives, intercultural competence has been regarded as one of the important learning outcomes of HE internationalisation (Deardorff, 2006).

## 1.2 Key Concepts

International students have been defined as persons who need to 'cross a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin' (UNESCO, 2012). The term 'foreign students' is also commonly used in the literature (Altbach, 2004a). Therefore, in this study, the term 'international students' is used to refer to individuals who leave their countries of origin to study abroad and those who pay international tuition fees. The term 'home students' in this study is applied to those who are British citizens and have been previously educated in the UK and those who pay the home student tuition fees. Several terms are used interchangeably in the literature, such as local students, domestic students, native students, and host students. In the UK, students who come from European countries are currently regarded as 'home students' for tuition fee purposes<sup>1</sup>. In this study, these three cohorts were treated as three different groups, i.e. international, European and home students.

The word, culture, was originally associated with its literal meaning of cultivating the land and then expanded to the cultivation of the individual soul or mind. Culture evolves over time and thus has been defined in many different ways. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) provided 156 definitions of culture. For example, it conveys 'shared meanings', which implies that culture is learned and shared among a group. It can also refer to 'the entirety of socially transmitted behaviour among a group, including arts, beliefs, institutions, and other products of human work and thought'. Historically, an essentialist view of culture has often been used to categorise people into different national groups, which are seen to be homogeneous in terms of belief, customs and behavioural norms (Harrison, 2015). This way of categorising people can be dangerous since culture labels can easily lead to both positive and negative stereotyping, causing negative impacts.

In addition, Holliday (1999) distinguished two paradigms of culture: small culture and large culture. Similar to the essentialist view, small culture refers to culture as 'small social groupings or activities wherever there is a cohesive behaviour and thus avoids culturist ethnic, national or international stereotyping' (Holliday, 1999, p. 237). On the other hand, a large culture paradigm focuses on ethnic, national and international concepts/cultures. It adopts the essentialist or culturist sense that essential differences exist between specific ethnic, national and

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<sup>1</sup> This might be changed after Brexit.



international groups (e.g. what can be seen as polite in a particular cultural context, such as Japanese culture), which can lead to stereotyping. Simplistic understandings of culture can be troublesome when culture is associated solely with ethnicity or nationality. This study adopts a constructivist view of culture in which culture is fluid and dynamic. It recognises that individuals share a broad sense of heritage, which to a great extent is determined by their nation of birth and forms their cultural identity, while other aspects, for example, social class or religion can be part of an individual's cultural identity too. These identities can be increasingly informed by broader global influences over time.

Some scholars argue that the notion of home students and international students is a false and confusing dichotomy (Ippolito, 2007). It suggests that not all international students or those who come from the same country share similar characteristics or have similar experiences. Home students are culturally diverse as well. They may come from different ethnic/religious groups or social/political classes and hence have diverse cultural experiences. It is also problematic to assume that all international students speak English as a foreign language and all home students are native English speakers. For example, international students from English-speaking countries such as America, Canada, or Australia who speak English as their first language, may have different experiences from international students who come from China or Japan, where English is spoken as a foreign language. As mentioned earlier, home students may share different cultural and linguistic experiences among themselves. Many home students who were born or grew up in another country may speak another language as their first language (Harrison, 2015). Although the researcher acknowledges that culture does not equate to nationality or ethnicity solely, the three student cohorts – home, European, and international students - were broadly categorised by their nationalities in this study.

In this study, disciplinary culture is another important concept in studying student intercultural competence development. The nature of the discipline can determine the scope and level of internationalisation within the curriculum and it can also impact staff and students' understanding and implementation of internationalisation (Dune, 2011). A number of studies have reported that students and staff from social science and humanities are more open towards an internationalised curriculum than those in science and technology subjects (Harrison, 2015). However, others believe that 'hard' sciences are more likely to achieve a higher level of internationalisation than 'soft' sciences (Marginson, 2011). This

suggests that disciplinary culture is an important aspect to consider when it comes to the discussion of internationalisation.

Intercultural adaptation is a term used to describe the process that individuals undergo when immersed in a new culture. Some researchers emphasised the importance of the nature of communication, indicating that intercultural adaptation is the stress and adaptation that a person goes through to avoid misunderstanding by changing their communicative behaviours, which leads to the development of intercultural communication skills (e.g. Kim & Ruben, 1988). Representative models include communication adaptation theory (e.g. Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991; Street & Giles, 1982) and intercultural adaptation model (Cai & Rodriguez, 1997). Different from the above definitions and models of intercultural adaptation, other researchers investigated the traits that contribute to individuals' adjustment in a new culture and the process of becoming intercultural individuals (e.g. Furnham, 1988, Black & Gregersen, 1991). They adopt the stance that individuals' personality can largely determine their perceptions towards intercultural environments and hence influences changes in their behaviours. Instead of looking at change in communicative behaviours, this study investigates how students' personalities and behaviours/attitudes change in intercultural situations. This definition of intercultural adaptation is therefore foregrounded in the present study, which focuses on the process of becoming interculturally competent individuals in a broader sense.

Some popular frameworks such as the cross-cultural adaptation model (Kim, 1988, 2001), the U-curve or W-curve model (Lysgaard, 1955), and the cultural synergy model (Jin, 1992) were adopted to study individuals intercultural adaptation in the literature. The first two models demonstrated different stages that sojourners go through whilst Jin and Cortazzi (1993) emphasised the two-way process of intercultural adaptation. Indeed, it can be problematic to study intercultural adaptation only from the perspective of individuals who are adapting and changing to fit into the host environment while overlooking the roles that the university, staff, and other students may play in this 'internationalisation' process. The experiences of home students have changed significantly over the past two decades as they encounter a large number of international students and intercultural classrooms have become the norm (Harrison, 2015). This study adopts a more comprehensive approach to study both home and international students' intercultural adaptation since intercultural competence is a desirable outcome and can develop in all students studying in internationalised university environments. Although intercultural adaptation has been

widely studied with international student cohorts, home students' experiences should be taken into account since they can also benefit from internationalised and intercultural experiences on the home campus.

The term intercultural competence (IC) first appeared in the 1950s and it was originally used in studies of expatriates who worked on overseas assignments and who communicated with colleagues who came from different countries (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). In the late 1970s, researchers started to use IC to study student sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation while studying abroad. In the literature, IC has been defined differently by many intercultural scholars, ranging from a generic communication achievement to some specific qualities related to one's personality traits, skills, attitudes, or knowledge. This study adopts the definition of IC as 'a complex set of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself' (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006, p.12). Since IC has been regarded as 'a complex set of abilities,' this study aims to investigate the fundamental *qualities* that one may need to develop IC rather than *skills, knowledge or communicative behaviours*. Although some would argue that it is difficult to demonstrate that IC improves in a short period of time, this study takes the stance that IC can be developed with appropriate training, and through a range of HE experiences and opportunities. The development of students' IC at the host university is investigated by measuring changes in individual's behaviours and attitudes before, during, and after the study period at the host university. Discussing IC as a set of qualities was considered to be important in this study with personality acknowledged as an important factor in intercultural experiences (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). The multicultural personality questionnaire (MPQ) was therefore selected as an appropriate tool to assess and evaluate students' IC over time. The MPQ comprises five dimensions: Open-mindedness (OM), Cultural Empathy (CE), Social Initiative (SI), Emotional Stability (ES), and Flexibility (FL). Further details on IC and the MPQ are provided in section 3.2.

IC is central to this study since it is considered to be an important graduate attribute that has been gradually recognised by many employers and organisations. There has been recognition that not only hard academic knowledge and technical skills are essential in the workplace, but also that soft skills such as interpersonal communication and IC are crucial, especially for those who work in a global environment (Del Vitto, 2008; Deardorff, 2016; Yemini, 2014; Mahadevan & Mayer,

2012; Zaharim et al., 2012). Graduate attributes such as international awareness and IC are necessary outcomes of HE internationalisation (de Wit, Hunter, & Coelen, 2015). Many companies in Europe recruit graduates from outside of their home country, in part due to the lack of domestic graduates who have the necessary skills and attributes for their jobs (ibid). On the other hand, globalisation enables graduates to move beyond their own country borders to seek employment opportunities elsewhere and to compete with people from all over the world to demonstrate that they have the most comprehensive, international, intercultural, and global skills for the role (Knight, 2004).

### **1.3 Rationale for the Study**

As a result of globalisation, external factors such as the flow of money, products, and people are affecting HEIs in many ways. One consequence is that internationalisation is mainly seen from political and economic perspectives (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). IoHE is currently measured by international outlook in many world university rankings, mainly determined through the ratio of international students and staff and the number of international research collaborations at each institution (Lumby & Foskett, 2016; THE, 2017). However, since HE is also responsible for advancing human knowledge and producing quality graduates, internationalisation in this context should be considered as an educational goal rather than a political or economic goal (Yang, 2002). As an ultimate goal of internationalisation of HE, IC has been regarded as an important learning outcome of internationalisation (Deardorff, 2006) and is also considered by many universities and employers as an essential graduate attribute which enables students to function effectively in the workplace and in an increasingly interconnected world (Knight, 2004; Del Vitto, 2008). Despite the importance of IC, surprisingly it has been rarely measured or discussed as an indicator of IoHE.

Previous research on IC has mainly been conducted within the context of cross-cultural adaptation among international students (e.g. Schartner, 2016). IC has rarely been discussed as a learning outcome of internationalisation for both home and international students (e.g. Deardorff, 2006) since home students have long been overlooked in cross-cultural adaptation studies. This is the rationale for the focus in this study on home and international graduates' perceptions and experiences, and preparedness for employment. The development of IC is of growing importance as the world we live in becomes more connected. While IoHE has been

reviewed in association with students' intercultural experiences (e.g. Gu et al., 2010), relatively little research associated with their IC development has applied the MPQ assessment, one of the measures adopted in the current study. In this study, the discussion of intercultural experiences has been based on the HE Internationalisation Framework developed by the Higher Education Academy (2014). The HE Internationalisation Framework contains three interrelated elements: internationalisation strategy (institution), IoC (curriculum), and internationalised experience (people). The discussion of internationalisation of HE in this study therefore incorporates discussion of the institutional and faculty internationalisation strategies, the internationalised curricula, and students' and staff perceptions and experiences, which pave the way for further discussion on students' IC development. The study investigates the extent to which studying in an 'internationalised' university develops home and international students' IC.

IoHE in many countries has been seen as a common phenomenon, especially in Anglophone countries, such as United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada (Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010). Some studies suggest that students who are in an internationalised/multicultural environment can naturally engage with one another and hence develop their IC automatically (Killick, 2012; Spencer-Oatey, 2010; Salisbury, et al., 2013). However, others problematise the notion that simply being in an internationalised/multicultural environment develops students' IC, suggesting that this requires intentional efforts from both staff and students (Turner & Robson, 2008; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013; Savicki, 2008).

In this study, the internationalised institution/environment was related to the concept of 'internationalisation at home' (IaH). The rationale is that the home campus can develop connections between home or domestic students and students from other cultures in the world and thus provide all students with opportunities to develop their cultural knowledge (Bennett, 2008). A study by Soria and Troisi (2014) showed that for home students, IaH activities can positively promote their IC and can have a similar effect to studying abroad, discussing how IoC can contribute to students' IC. Leask (2009) proposed that the development of IC was a key outcome of an internationalised curriculum, as formal and informal curricula contribute to students' intercultural engagement by encouraging meaningful interactions between students from different cultural backgrounds. In addition to recognising otherness and understanding other cultures, identifying a sense of self in the world is also an important outcome of developing IC (Killick, 2012). Studying in an internationalised

home campus can contribute to what Killick (ibid) describes as the 'internationalised self', as an important graduate attribute that enables students to effectively function in this increasingly interconnected world.

This study attempts to address the gap in the literature between IoHE studies and students' intercultural adaptation studies. It investigates whether international and home students who study on the home campus develop IC as a learning outcome of internationalisation, through their academic and socio-cultural experiences.

- IoHE studies have been associated widely with the discussion of IaH, IoC, and internationalised self, but rarely related to students' IC development as a measurable learning outcome. On the other hand, IC has been widely measured and studied as an outcome of international students' cross-cultural adaptation, but rarely discussed as an outcome/indicator of the internationalisation of the host university. IC can be affected by the institution's internationalisation strategy, disciplinary culture, curriculum content, modes of assessment, and students' intercultural experiences.
- In contrast with previous studies, this research did not study IC within a particular ethnicity (e.g. international students or Chinese students) or any particular programme of study. Instead, it aimed to compare and contrast students' experience and IC development among different student cohorts (home and international) and across three different disciplines (Business, Education, and Engineering). This interdisciplinary perspective has not been well addressed in the literature.
- Extensive literature on internationalisation has focused on international students' experiences, yet little is known about how home student and academic staff perceptions and disciplinary differences impact on internationalisation in practice.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Research**

This study aimed to explore to what extent UK and non-UK students' academic and socio-cultural experiences contributed to the development of their IC during one-year master's studies in a British university. However, since more international students

than home students participated in this study (interviews and surveys), the data set was skewed towards international students. This was inevitable since fewer home students were enrolled in the postgraduate taught programmes (Education, Business and Engineering disciplines) that were targeted at the host university. The skew in the data was further addressed in the research design and methodology chapter (4.3). Since the nature of the discipline can determine the scope and level of internationalisation within the curriculum (Dune, 2011), the present study aims to investigate the impact of the curriculum on students' intercultural competence development across three disciplines (Engineering, Business, and Education), which includes the learning environment, curriculum, modes of assessment, and staff and students' views.

This study further investigated the factors that may facilitate or hinder individual student's IC development before, during and after the study period at the host university. Based on the dimensions of the HE internationalisation framework (HEA, 2014) and the factors relevant to sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation before and during their study (Berry, 2006), a conceptual framework was developed (see Figure 11) to illustrate students' IC from both macro (HE internationalisation) and micro levels (individual intercultural adaptation).

One-year master students at the host university were specifically studied for the following reasons: a). one-year Master programmes have a relatively more diverse student population. b). international postgraduate students experience a 'triple transition' (Jindal-Snape & Ingram, 2013), which means that, firstly, they move to a new country, secondly they move to a new educational system, and thirdly, they move to a new level of academic study. c). one year of master's study is a practical timespan for the research to conduct a pre- and post-test over nine months, before and after the programme of study.

### **1.5 Personal Motivation for the Study**

As an international student in the UK, I encountered many difficulties and challenges, particularly in my first year here. I tried hard to make friends with local students and the local community but it did not happen the way I expected. In the lectures, I intentionally sat with local and other international students to form a discussion group but I felt anxious and excluded. Was it because my English was not good enough? Was it because they did not like me? Was it because I was not capable of doing group work with them? All those negative thoughts stayed in my head throughout my

Masters study. But later, I made some really good friends along my PhD journey. We shared a lot with each other about our different cultures, beliefs, hobbies, and life philosophies. When it comes to the nature of human beings, all these differences seemed trivial. In fact, what makes us different from each other can bring us even closer. I began to realise that an open-minded and empathetic mind-set could not only help me to get to know other cultures more, but also enable me to develop friendships that I would be less likely to encounter in my home country. Studying in such a 'multicultural' environment made me question 'what are the benefits and disadvantages that internationalisation brings to the university and its students?'

In order to answer the question, I did some preliminary research about internationalisation before I started my PhD. Indeed, internationalisation has become one of the key debates in the HE sectors in the past two decades. In contemporary HE, recruiting international students and improving university global rankings seem to have become two important elements that are naturally associated with internationalisation. Alongside the inevitable drive to do well in global HE rankings, universities are also keen to demonstrate that they provide a high quality student experience. The literature related to IoHE has included studies about institutional internationalisation strategies and IoC and IaH. Studies such as these can inform the development of more student-focused elements of internationalisation strategies. What can studies involving home and international student perspectives contribute to the debate? This was my interest in IoHE studies. My study sought to research and to understand how IoHE is viewed from both staff and students' perspectives in order to provide recommendations for an approach to internationalisation that utilises the diversity on campus to support the development of intercultural skills and competences for all students.

## **1.6 The Structure of this Thesis**

This thesis consists of five key chapters, including two literature review chapters on IoHE and IC respectively, and a methodology chapter, analysis chapter, and discussion chapter. Here are the summaries of each main chapter:

Chapter two reviews studies in the field of IoHE covering the aspects of marketisation (section 2.2), internationalisation at home (section 2.3), internationalisation of the curriculum (section 2.4), and global graduate attributes (section 2.5). This chapter is intended to introduce and contextualise the key concept of this study – IaH – and how it can impact student's IC development. Drawing on the



internationalisation of HE framework (HEA, 2014), IoHE is discussed from three interrelated dimensions in this chapter, including institution (internationalisation strategy), curriculum (internationalised curricula), and people (internationalised experiences).

Chapter three reviews the empirical and theoretical studies focusing on IC. It begins with a discussion on the definitions and assessment of IC. The key research instrument, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) is introduced in this chapter.

Chapter four introduces the methodological approach adopted in this study. Based on the pragmatic paradigm, a mixed-method research design was employed, including both quantitative and qualitative research. This study adopted pre- and post- surveys, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis to collect data over a period of nine months. Furthermore, the analysis of variance, independent-sample t-test, pair-sample t-test and correlation coefficient were used to analyse the survey data, while content analysis was adopted to analyse the interview data and official documents. The themes which underpin the organisation of the analysis chapter have been coded and illustrated in section 4.6.2.

Chapter five, the analysis chapter, presents the results of the data analysis. Adopting a mixed-method approach, this chapter presents both qualitative and quantitative results. The qualitative results are based on students' academic and socio-cultural experiences (learning environment, curriculum, assessment/group work, culture shock, social contact, and social activity) from the interview data. The quantitative data measured students' IC with the MPQ and its association with pre-course factors such as prior overseas experience, English language ability and development, and gender.

Chapter six discusses the findings of this study with reference to the literature reviewed in chapters two and three. As multicultural group work is a common form of assessment in the Engineering school, both home and international students reported that they experienced negative experiences in multicultural group work, which resulted in segregation and exclusion among different student cohorts and hence a significant decrease in open-mindedness (OM). The result challenges findings from previous studies claiming that being in an intercultural environment leads to the development of IC. This study suggests that without positive guidance, mixed culture group work can have a negative effect on students' IC. Moreover, home students were found to face fewer academic and socio-cultural adaptation

challenges; indeed, a higher mean score in social initiative (SI) was observed, particularly at the beginning of their sojourn. However, after nine months, international students became more adapted both academically and socio-culturally, resulted in a higher mean score in flexibility (FL). Last but not least, students' perceptions of internationalisation were found to have changed over time. Initially, participants perceived internationalisation in relation to the number of international students and staff on campus; over time they came to understand the importance of the integration of students from different contexts and cultures to an internationalised HE environment.

Finally, this study concludes with some reflections on students' development of IC as an outcome of studying at an internationalised university and the development of more student-focused elements of internationalisation strategies. It provides some recommendations for an approach to internationalisation that utilises the diversity on campus to support the development of IC for all students.

## Chapter 2. Internationalisation of Higher Education

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of studies in the field of HE internationalisation. In light of globalisation, internationalisation has become a significant issue in the HE sector. Many universities aim to market their education programmes worldwide to generate income and regard the recruitment of international students as a key indicator of the level of internationalisation (Warwick, 2014). Section 2.2 focuses on the economic, political, and academic imperatives for UK HE internationalisation. In contrast to the marketisation agenda, a considerable body of research focuses on more values-based and inclusive aspects of the HE endeavour, with considerations of how all students' learning experiences may be enhanced through the internationalisation at home (IaH) movement and internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) strategy. Section 2.3 aims to discuss what higher education institutions (HEIs) prioritise in their internationalisation strategies, and whether IaH is a key strategic area. Section 2.4 focuses on understandings of IoC and to what extent there are disciplinary differences that may contribute to differences in how IoC is implemented in teaching, learning, and assessment. As a significant learning outcome of the internationalisation of HE, the literature related to 'global' graduates is explored, to consider what organisations and employers are looking for in terms of graduate attributes in recent years. Section 2.5 discusses how IC as an essential graduate attribute, receives increasingly more attention in today's society. By using the internationalisation of HE framework (see Figure 1), this chapter explores three interrelated dimensions of HE internationalisation-institution, curriculum and people, which pave the way for the development of chapter 3 - IC as a significant learning outcome for students.

This study argues that IC should be seen as an important learning outcome of HE internationalisation for all students. However, IC does not necessarily develop automatically by simply studying in a multicultural environment. Creating an environment where IC is valued and supported requires the engagement and the multidimensional efforts of stakeholders in the institution. It involves a two-way process including top-down and bottom-up approaches. The top-down approach refers to the institution's internationalisation strategy and the extent to which it provides opportunities for the development of students' IC through the provision of internationalised curriculum and assessment and the expectation that these will

contribute to the development of global graduates. The bottom-up approach refers to elements of individual's IC/personalities (e.g. open-mindedness, cultural empathy, etc.), which can determine their attitudes and behaviours in intercultural situations. As students become more intercultural competent, the university can demonstrate the success of internationalisation at home and the development of graduates with the skills and aptitudes for employment in the global workplace and for global citizenship. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on intercultural competence.

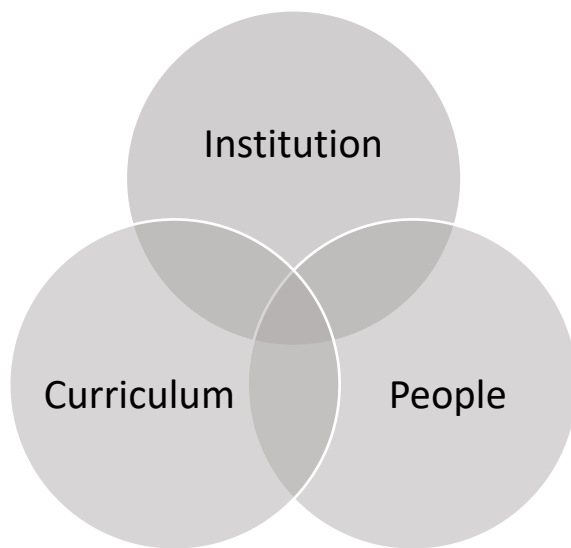


Figure 1 The Internationalisation of Higher Education Framework<sup>2</sup>

In order to identify relevant literature, a number of research strategies were adopted. To begin with, the word 'internationalisation' with any possible combination describing higher education (university/universities, higher education institution/institutions) was searched on Web of Science database and Google Scholar to identify relevant journal articles. Then terms such as 'internationalisation at home' and 'internationalisation of the curriculum' were searched for more specific information. After developing a general knowledge of this field, some well-known authors' work and the most cited articles were reviewed including journal articles and books, along with those who were recently cited in key authors' or well-known publications. This chapter summarises the key findings from the review of work in the field by several key researchers who specialise in IaH (e.g. Wächter, 2000, 2010; Knight, 1999, 2004, 2008; de Wit, 2010; Wihlborg & Robson, 2018; Beelen & Jones, 2015; Caruana, 2014; Marginson, 2011; Teichler, 1999, 2004; Yang, 2000, 2014)

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Higher Education Academy, 2014.

and IoC studies (e.g. Leask, 2011, 2015; Jones & Killick, 2007; Clifford & Montgomery, 2014, 2017; Childress, 2010; Deardorff, 2006; Dunne, 2008; Crosling et al., 2008). A detailed summary of these studies from 1999<sup>3</sup> to 2018 can be found in Appendix F.

## **2.2 Internationalisation and Marketisation in UK Higher Education**

Globalisation and internationalisation are used interchangeably in many studies, however, these two concepts are distinct from each other while closely related (Sanderson, 2004; Yang, 2002; Teichler, 2009; Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Scott, 1995). Globalisation is a 'reality' (Callinicos, 2001, p.19) and an uncontrollable process (Wächter, 2010). Fundamentally, it is an economic process of integration that goes beyond national borders, contributing to the flow of knowledge, people, and ideas (Yang, 2000). This conceptualisation is in line with Reichert and Wächter's (2000, p.10) proposal that globalisation brings 'forceful changes in the economic, social, political and cultural environment, brought by global competition, the integration of markets, increasingly dense communication networks, information flows and mobility'.

Internationalisation, on the other hand, is a response to globalisation (Knight, 1999), valuing cooperation among nations rather than competition, although the definition for it is contested (de Wit, 2011; Green & Whitsed, 2013). In order to clarify these two terms, van Vught et al. (2002, p.17) offered the following interpretation:

'In terms of both practice and perceptions, internationalisation is closer to the well-established tradition of international cooperation and mobility and to the core values of quality and excellence, whereas globalisation refers more to competition, pushing the concept of higher education as a tradable commodity and challenging the concept of higher education as a public good.'

Internationalisation as a response to globalisation in HE has been controversial and some issues have been widely discussed, such as 'destroying cultural heritage, diminishing language diversity, reducing the variety of academic cultures and structures, quality decline or even supporting imperialist take-overs' in HE (Teichler, 1996, p.6). Leading universities in Denmark recently withdrew provision in English

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<sup>3</sup> In 1995, the General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) brought HE into a global market and the term 'internationalisation' began to be popular in education context since 1999 and that is why the earliest literature started in 1999.

and reverted to programme delivery in Danish to reduce the number of international students and staff (THE, 2018). The reasons for this included that almost half of the graduates chose to leave the country and two-thirds of international students were not considered to make any positive contribution to Danish public finances (ibid). In spite of the controversial and worrying dimensions of internationalisation, most studies tend to look more at its opportunities than drawbacks.

Governmental funding was the dominant source of funding for HEIs in OECD countries since the early 1990s but this trend has changed as private investment in HE has increased and governments have played a less important role. Compared with the 1990s when almost all the HE funding relied on governments, today more than 20% of HE funding comes from private sources in half of the OECD countries (Kärkkäinen, 2006; Universities UK, 2013). Government funding in the UK was reduced to the extent that less than one-third of HE funding was offered by the government including grants for teaching and learning (13%), and research (16%). The rest of the income comes from tuition fees and education contracts (49%), investments (0.5%), and donation (1.5%) (see Figure 2), contributing to a total of £38.2 billion in income in 2017-18 (Universities UK, 2018). With regard to the £18.9 billion tuition fee income, a quarter comes from international students' fees and the total number of non-UK students studying in the UK HE in 2017-18 was 458,490 (Universities UK, 2018).

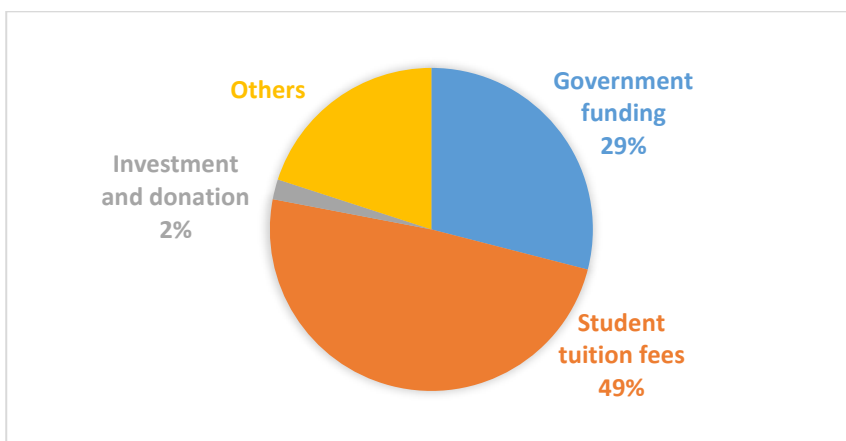


Figure 2 How Universities are funded<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: Universities UK, 2018.

The Prime Minister's Initiative 1999 recognised the economic importance of international students to the UK. The result of the funding reduction in the HE sectors in England has meant that HEIs rely heavily on students' tuition fees to generate income. It is well recognised that there is a strong economic imperative to increase the number of students, especially international students as reinforced by the following movements. In 1979, the British government introduced full tuition fees for international students. In 1995, the General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) brought education services, particularly HE, into a global trading market worldwide (Knight, 2002). With the introduction of tuition fees for domestic students who studied in England in 1997<sup>5</sup>, HE was gradually transformed from a completely free education system towards a market-driven business. As Dixon (2006, p.320) declared, universities were being 'pushed into the market place in a way that is reshaping them in their purposes and in the knowledge they create and disseminate'. The 'marketisation' discourse has been discussed by many researchers who claim that knowledge is becoming a private commodity that can be traded worldwide by HEIs (De Vita & Case, 2003; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Komljenovic & Robertson, 2016; Ilieva, Beck & Waterstone, 2014). International students have played an important role in this transition since international student fees are a major source of income generation for universities, and hence recruitment of international students is a major strategic focus of university internationalisation policies. HEIs, therefore, have developed marketing strategies to attract more international students to the UK and have also set up student support networks within universities (Chaney, 2013). HEIs both globally and nationally compete for international students. Teichler (2004, p.23) noted that many discussions on the effects of globalisation on HE, focused on 'marketisation, competition, and management' while other terms such as 'knowledge society', 'global village', and 'global understanding' were hardly taken into consideration in this era of internationalisation. The former emphasises on managerialism in HE, an organisational arm of neoliberalism, attracting increasing attention in the past two decades (Harlow et al., 2013; Teichler, 2004). However, this phenomenon has been changed in recent years and a considerable body of research now focuses on more values-based aspects of HE.

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<sup>5</sup> The education systems are different in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the education system in England will be the context of this study.

As an agent in the process of globalisation, internationalisation has become a significant topic in the development of HE that generates increasing debates and discussions about its nature, causes, consequences and future implications (Robson et al., 2018). Although there are various definitions and understandings of internationalisation, the most widely cited broad definition of internationalisation is:

‘The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education’ (Knight, 2004, p.26).

Many scholars agree that IoHE is an integration of an international or intercultural dimension into teaching and research (Deardorff, 2006; Wachter, 1999; Knight, 2015). However, this idea has also been criticised for being rather broad and vague. It has been therefore revised and interpreted differently over time. A recently revised definition from de Wit et al. (2015, p.29) moves beyond describing the impact of internationalisation on education to encompass research and service or civic contribution:

‘Internationalisation is the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society’

Compared with Knight’s understanding of internationalisation, de Wit et al. acknowledge the growing emphasis on more equitable and socially responsible approaches to internationalisation. As de Wit et al. argue, embracing the idea of sustainability is one of the priorities that HEIs need to tackle in the future, to respond to the issues of ‘equity of rights and access, advancement of education and research and much more’ (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011, p.17). Internationalisation at home has been an important movement to respond to the issues of quality of rights and access for the non-mobile majority to an internationalised and intercultural university experience. Engaging students in internationalisation of the curriculum has been a crucial means to embrace the whole student population on a home campus to achieve internationalisation agenda (Trinh & Conner, 2019).

Before the 1980s, the term ‘internationalisation’ was mainly applied in political contexts and governmental relations rather than the educational sector (Knight, 2008). But later, in the 1990s, internationalisation gradually became a key component in HE (Teichler, 2009). Since then, the recruitment of fee-paying international students has contributed enormously to the national economy and



become an established feature of UK HE. HEIs' strategies and policies have been influenced by the increasing number of international students' participating through expanding international markets. Economically, internationalisation of education is also seen as a means to generate income for HEIs by exporting 'education' as a commodity, for example by increasing the number of international partnerships, overseas branches and transnational education arrangements (Becker et al., 2009) which can be used to enhance a nation's economic growth and competitiveness worldwide (Lyman, 1995; Van der Wende, 1996; Knight, 1996; de Wit, 2002).

Economic rationales for internationalisation seem to have been the most prevalent driver in many countries, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. At a national level, internationalisation enhances national competitiveness and supports the national economy. At an institutional level, in order to compete globally, institutions, especially research intensive universities, have determined to improve their international reputations and rankings (Zezeza, 2012; Jin & Cortazzi, 2017). Academically, internationalisation has been said to push universities worldwide to compete to reach 'international' academic standards (Zezeza, 2012). However, politically, internationalisation can be seen as a vehicle for exploitation and marginalisation of the developing countries (Zezeza, 2012) and as a new form of colonialism through delivering curriculum, modes of teaching and English as the medium of instruction from the North to South<sup>6</sup> (Altbach, 2004). Hence, critics claim that the notion of internationalisation is in nature associated with westernisation and unequal international power distribution (Yang, 2002; Teichler, 1996). Leask (2011, p.6) echoing that 'the dominance of Western educational models will define what is knowledge, what research questions are asked, who will investigate them and if and how the results will be applied'. Other critics address the pursuit of primarily financial incentives, cautioning that this can bring disadvantages to current HEIs' reputation and reliability. Recent studies highlight the negative effects of HE internationalisation, for example, education commercialisation, students' consumerisation, knowledge commodification, diploma and accreditation mills, and pursuing international rankings (Knight, 2013). These trends indicate the growing commercialised values and business practices in HE, as some early

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<sup>6</sup> In the 1980s, the world was geographically split into relatively richer and poorer nations as Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere. But there are some exceptions, which will not be discussed here.

research studies (Teichler, 2004; Sadlak, 2001) stated globalisation is often associated with commercial knowledge transfer.

In addition to the economic, political and academic imperatives for HE internationalisation, scholars have recently placed more emphasis on the socio-cultural benefits of internationalisation, which enable the academic community to enhance students' intercultural awareness, value mutual understanding and cooperation among different nations, and prepare them to function effectively in international and intercultural contexts (Al-Youssef, 2009; Jin & Cortazzi, 2017). Attention has also been given to the importance of responsive initiatives to internationalise programmes of study and curriculum in specific ways (Turner & Robson, 2008) to promote intercultural awareness, an international outlook and the values of global citizenship through the decolonisation of the curriculum in HE (Radcliffe, 2017). Specifically, for students living and working in a globalised, multicultural and fast changing world, internationalisation can develop the knowledge, attitudes, and intercultural skills that they need as global citizens<sup>7</sup> (McGrath-Champ, et al., 2012; Altbach, 2013). Politically, it is claimed that through such initiatives internationalisation can promote peace and national security (de Wit, 2002).

In contrast with the marketisation agenda, a considerable body of research focuses on these more values-based and inclusive aspects of the HE endeavour. Considerations of the student experience through IoC include what content should be included, how an internationalised curriculum can be delivered effectively, whether and how it can be assessed, and why an international curriculum is needed<sup>8</sup>. In contrast to the market-driven approach driving university internationalisation strategies, some universities have chosen to focus specifically on the students' development, emphasising the importance of global citizenship (Caruana, 2009) and the development of graduate attributes for life and work in a global economy<sup>9</sup>.

Developing students' critical global citizenship skills is perhaps more relevant than ever with the politics of Trump, Brexit, and the worrying rise of anti-immigrant views and populist nationalism (Fukuyama, 2016), which have significantly influenced the global landscape for IoHE (Altbach & de Wit, 2018). Increasing problems created

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<sup>7</sup> Global citizens means 'citizen of the world'. This concept will be further discussed in section 2.5.1.

<sup>8</sup> Curriculum related discussion can be found in section 2.4.

<sup>9</sup> More information regarding global citizenship and graduate attributes please refer to section 2.5.

by governmental decisions to tighten visa rules and increase tuition fees, have also directly contributed to a decline in international student numbers. Some researchers argue that it is the time to emphasise more on 'internationalisation at home', a more inclusive internationalisation with a shift from quantity (student numbers) to quality of student outcomes (including global citizenship) (Altbach & de Wit, 2018; de Wit & Jones, 2017).

### **2.3 Internationalisation at Home**

Over the last few decades, a different approach to internationalisation of HE has emerged and that is IaH, which is also known as 'internal internationalisation' or 'non-mobility' internationalisation (Knight, 2008; Clarke, 2008). The concept of IaH originated from a position paper published in 2000 by the European Association for International Education (EAIE; Crowther et al., 2000) and recently became an important focus within the UK context (Jones & Killick, 2013). IaH is broadly defined as 'any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility' (Nilsson, 2003, p.31). Specifically, for the majority of students or staff who are not mobile, the term is used to describe the activities happening on home campuses, for the purpose of raising awareness of cultural diversity and develop students' international understanding and intercultural learning (Caruana, 2009; Trahar & Hyland, 2011). Incorporating international and intercultural dimensions in teaching, learning, and extra-curricular activities, encouraging the development of friendships with different ethnic groups and integrating foreign students into campus life and activities are all frequently discussed and researched (Knight, 2008; Harrison, 2015). According to Knight (2008), the IaH movement was, in general, curriculum-oriented. Later, Beelen and Jones (2015, p.76) proposed that 'IaH is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments'. The concept of IaH, in nature, critiques the traditional understanding of internationalisation in which outbound mobility is an essential element (Caruana, 2006). Outbound mobility also refers to 'internationalisation abroad', which means activities that take place across borders, such as student and faculty mobility, projects, programs, and provider mobility<sup>10</sup> (Knight, 2008). Specifically, activities such

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<sup>10</sup> Provider mobility means the mobility of services, such as transnational education.

as exchange programs (e.g. Erasmus programme<sup>11</sup>), placements, overseas campuses, and transnational HE are widely discussed in the literature.

Previous research studies largely focus on outbound student and academic staff mobility (mostly in European contexts) as a dominant part of many institutional and national internationalisation strategies for the past decade and incoming international student mobility (particularly in English speaking countries such as Britain, US, Australia, and New Zealand research contexts) as a result of internationalisation of HE (e.g. de Wit, 2010; Knight, 2008; Teekens, 2006; Teichler, 2017). However, a gradual shift has been observed where mobility is no longer the sole instrument and element of internationalisation. With the IaH movement, IoC, and teaching and learning processes have become key areas of an approach to impart international and intercultural knowledge to students who work and live in an increasingly interconnected world (de Wit, 2010). In recent years, providing students with an international outlook and intercultural learning experiences has become prominent in universities' internationalisation strategies. IaH values the opportunities that non-mobile students and staff can have in order to gain an international experience from internationalisation through interacting with international students and curriculum development (Harrison, 2015). In general, mobility is therefore, no longer the primary objective of universities' internationalisation strategies, but is one of the ways to achieve it. Crossing borders is no longer seen as essential but can be regarded as one of means to gain an international and intercultural experience (de Wit, 2010). IaH on the other hand has become more apparent in internationalisation strategies.

Regardless of different internationalisation strategies adopted in different countries and HEIs, it appears that there is a resurgence of interest in IaH in European HEIs in the past few years. Although many researchers claim that universities started to recognise the importance of developing and preparing students' abilities to 'live and work effectively and ethically in an increasingly interconnected world' (Green & Whitsed, n.d., p.5), compared with internationalisation abroad, IaH and students' IC development are still under-developed in most HEIs strategies. Koutsantoni's (2006a) review of institutional internationalisation strategy found that 51 UK universities mentioned 'internationalisation abroad' activities (international projects, student, and staff

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<sup>11</sup> Erasmus programme is a European student exchange programme established in 1987.

mobility) in their university's internationalisation strategy while 39 universities pointed out IaH activities (internationalising the curriculum, and the teaching and learning process) however it lacked details and plans. Some universities' internationalisation strategies identify IaH and students' IC development by valuing students' diversity, however, very few actions have been carried out (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2007). For example, in the host university considered, although both approaches have been broadly addressed, the IaH movement is relatively less presented. On the other hand, the 'internationalisation abroad' strategy is relatively well delivered, which includes the recruitment of international students and staff with diverse backgrounds, the development of international mobility opportunities for students and staff, as well as international research collaborations (University H, 2016). The international and global elements have become the top priorities in forming vision and mission statements not only at the institutional level but also at the faculty level. For example, the vision statement in the business discipline in the host university is 'to be an internationally excellent business school and to build a responsible future for both society and business globally'; the engineering school claims to have an international element with students from 45 different countries and by encouraging intercultural learning (University H, 2016).

Although the university's internationalisation strategy provides a guide to develop the way forward for faculty, staff, and students, studies show that many universities prioritise mobility for economic imperative and global ranking, rather than the implementation of IaH (Robson, Almeida, & Schartner, 2018; Lumby & Foskett, 2016). It is suggested that, whereas institutional internationalisation strategies foreground IaH activities and students' IC development to some extent, most UK universities focus solely on the recruitment of international students, since they provide a major source of income for these universities (Universities UK, 2017; Koutsantoni, 2006b; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2007). Even in the methodology for world university rankings, international staff ratio, international student ratio, and international collaboration are regarded as important indicators of an 'international outlook' (THE, 2017), influencing how internationalisation is implemented by universities competing globally to improve their rankings and reputations (Toyoshima, 2007; Zeleza, 2012; Hazelkorn, 2015).

However, strategic preoccupation with world university rankings has been criticised for contradicting more responsible approaches to internationalisation, in which the university focuses on producing internationally competent and employable

graduates who are able to contribute to their communities and society. IaH brings attention to the importance of developing students' relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups (Wächter, 2003). In light of globalisation and the increasingly interconnected world, graduates nowadays are expected to be able to work with people who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (HEA, 2016). International, intercultural, and global awareness and skills are seen as important attributes for 'global' graduates (Campbell, 2010; Knight, 2004). The host university's graduate skills framework reflects the aim to prepare graduates with an international perspective for learning, living, and working in a global economy (University H, 2016). It includes the ability to apply academic knowledge and skills to a global context and cultivate cross-cultural friendships in order to develop cross-cultural knowledge, skills, understandings, and opportunities (University H, 2016). The ultimate goal of teaching and learning for achieving internationalisation at the host university is to encourage students and staff to have global awareness, become global citizens and therefore contribute to the worldwide community (University H, 2016).

In 2014, the British Council published a report highlighting the importance of student integration in relation to internationalisation. Many universities claim their internationalisation status due to the large number of international students on campus, but this has been pointed out as problematic by many researchers. Instead, more meaningful interactions among students should be regarded as a significant indicator for measuring internationalisation (Groepel-Klein, Germelmann, & Glaum, 2010).

“simply having a diverse student body does not mean the education or even the campus is global in nature. What comes as an essential part of a global education is the inclusion of international students in communities and classes. Integration of all students is an elemental factor in the expanding concept of internationalisation.”

In Almeida et al.'s (2018) study, four elements have been specifically identified to understand IaH: institutional strategizing, internationalised curricula, student integration, and inclusivity. The study suggests that IaH involves providing an internationalised university experience to the non-mobile majority of students and the importance of the role of home students in the integration of international student cohorts into home campuses. Students' integration, as an essential element in the concept of internationalisation, is further discussed in section 3.5 in association with

their academic and socio-cultural experiences at the host university. This study further investigates the extent to which IaH is operationalised, particularly in the UK HE context, and its association with students' intercultural competence development.

Regarding the development of intercultural competence, Soria and Troisi (2014) reported a positive association between IaH activities and students' self-reported development of intercultural competence. Their findings suggested that students who attended on-campus activities (both curricular and co-curricular activities) with international elements had higher scores in intercultural competence than those who study or travel abroad in a traditional way. They also pointed out that developing international friendships on campus can contribute to students' development of intercultural competence<sup>12</sup>.

### ***2.3.1 Students and staff understandings of internationalisation***

Internationalisation is a 'conceptually elusive' concept (Knight, 2008; Doiz et al., 2014, p. 172) that means different things to different people. In addition to internationalisation strategy that has been discussed in section 2.3, in order to understand how internationalisation is implemented and enacted within institutions, explicitly and comprehensively, it is important that students and staff understandings of internationalisation are explored in their specific learning and teaching context (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). Staff and students are identified as 'core players' in the internationalisation process (Teekens, 2006, p. 30) and their experiences can illustrate how well internationalisation strategies in their own institutions have been translated into practice (Llurda et al., 2014). However, little has been known about how staff and students perceive the approach to internationalisation adopted at their host institutions and the importance that is attributed to IC within such approaches (Trahar & Hyland, 2011; Vinther & Slethaug, 2015). In this study, it is crucial to explore home and international students and staff lived experiences and perceptions of internationalisation in alignment with intercultural competence.

It is important to investigate students distinct understandings of internationalisation. In Wihlborg's (2004) research, students' understandings of internationalisation were studied in a Swedish nurse education programme by conducting interviews with 24 students using a phenomenographic approach.

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<sup>12</sup> Intercultural competence is further discussed in chapter 3.

Although it is not clearly stated whether participating students were all home students, findings from this study showed that most students had a pedagogical stance understanding of internationalisation, recognising elements of an internationalised experience such as international placement, international lectures, development of professional maturity, knowledge about other countries, preparedness to work in other countries, personal growth, and languages. Similarly, Pattison and Robson (2013) found that international counselling students regarded that their personal and professional development, including intercultural awareness and communication skills, was an important outcome of an internationalised experience. Both of these studies identified the pedagogical aspect of internationalisation, and the importance that internationalisation should contribute to students' personal and professional development.

A recent mixed-methods (i.e. survey and focus groups) case study conducted by Schartner and Cho (2016), investigated home and international students and staff perceptions of internationalisation. Findings showed that mobility and diversity were the two predominant themes identified by students and staff that were associated with an internationalised university. Findings indicated that both students and staff in this study were uncertain about the concepts of internationalisation at home and global citizenship. Compared with the studies that were conducted by Wihlborg (2004) and Pattison and Robson (2013), student participants in Schartner and Cho's (2016) study expressed a relatively conventional understanding of internationalisation, emphasising student mobility and diversity. Although the studies that have been reviewed explored students' views and understandings of internationalisation at home, the different results could be attributed to their different research methods, samples and contexts.

In addition, a mixed method research study (i.e. semi-structured interviews and focus groups) investigated 100 undergraduate home students' views on internationalisation at home at a British university (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). Students perceived internationalisation at home as successful intercultural interaction among students from different cultural backgrounds. Likewise, Ryall (2014) pointed out that social integration and intercultural interaction are essential elements in understanding and implementing internationalisation at home. It can be seen that internationalisation is perceived differently by students in different studies, from mobility and diversity, personal and professional development to intercultural interaction and social integration. It is worth noting that the differences between



home and international students' perceptions of internationalisation are not salient. Instead, disciplinary difference seems to be relevant in this context. In Harrison and Peacock's (2009) study, findings showed that students from Social Science and Business subjects had more positive views on the value of internationalisation than students from Science or Humanities. This is supported by a number of studies, suggesting that although generic approaches to teach home students on internationalisation are required, subject-specific contextualisation and pedagogy matters (e.g. Leask, 2012; Beelen & Jones, 2015).

In addition to the UK HE context, a few studies were conducted in other countries, which also center the student voice in IaH studies. Trinh and Conner (2019) studied 23 Vietnamese domestic students' experiences of internationalisation of the curriculum<sup>13</sup> (IoC) with qualitative research methods i.e. focus groups and interviews. The study argued the importance of student engagement in the development of IoC at home since they bring valuable resources, diversity and inclusion into the programmes. IoC was discussed as a strategy to achieve HE internationalisation. Similarly, a recent study was conducted by Fiț and Gologan (2018) in Romanian HE institutions, investigating students' perception of HE internationalisation. They found that most of the students consider their universities as internationalised but not in a profound way. It was only shown from a variety of international subjects, different languages on the website, some programs delivered in English or other foreign languages and the number of international students on campus. Although there is an increasing attention on student experience with regard to HE internationalisation studies, it is suggested that HE internationalisation was predominantly discussed with student mobility or the internationalised curriculum and little has been focused on students' learning outcome of internationalisation, such as the development of intercultural competence.

Regarding staff understanding of internationalisation, Ryall (2014) conducted both questionnaire and interviews with 75 academic staff members in a Health Sciences faculty. Staff claimed that internationalisation, in the HE context, should be perceived as both a process and an outcome, the process involving elements such as exchanging good practise ideas, promoting a feeling of belonging to the university, understanding the needs of others, and developing intercultural awareness; the

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<sup>13</sup> Detailed explanation of internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) can be found in section 2.4.

outcome of internationalisation is the integration of individuals. Wihlborg (2003) investigated 60 university teachers in a Swedish nursing programme using both survey and interviews, and the findings suggested that teachers tend to relate internationalisation to organisational purpose and educational purpose. This suggests that in their view, internationalisation means adapting programmes for best fit into the European or global community. The extent to which internationalisation is carried out in their teaching was related to their prior overseas experiences. The above two studies investigating staff perceptions of internationalisation shared some similarities, for example, both mentioned internationalisation of the curriculum to fit into a global-wide context. However, participants in Wihlborg's (2003) study did not focus too much on students' intercultural development. Other studies found that academic staff have a rather narrow interpretation of internationalisation and viewed it as a market-driven strategy for the recruitment of international students (Jackson, Robson, & Huddart, 2012).

Compared to students' understandings of internationalisation, staff views are less represented in the literature. Therefore, there is a need to look into both students and staff understandings and experiences of internationalisation at home and the challenges they may encounter. Some studies presented that academic staff perceived internationalisation as a powerful but a negative factor in their workplace, which increases workloads and pressure, as well as representing a shift away from their preferred academic (disciplinary) identities (Turner & Robson, 2009; Merrick, 2013). The following section discusses the importance of internationalisation of the curriculum in developing intercultural competence from a disciplinary perspective.

## **2.4 Internationalisation of the Curriculum**

As mentioned in section 2.3, according to Beelen and Jones (2015), IaH involves 'internationalisation of the curriculum' by integrating international and intercultural dimensions into the curriculum (e.g. Heffernan et al., 2018). Some researchers propose that IoC is an important strategy/approach in the IaH movement that should be valued by universities and stakeholders to prepare their graduates to live and work in an intercultural and international environment in the future (Parsons, 2010; Crosling et al., 2008). Tracing back to the year when the IaH movement started, Crowther et al. (2000) propose the importance of having diverse resources and an internationalised curriculum in forming the vision of IaH. Therefore, IoC is not

synonymous with IaH, but rather it is regarded as an approach to IaH. IaH involves, in fact, more than this one dimension.

Assessment, learning, and teaching are the main facets of IoC (Jones and Killick, 2007). Curriculum design, in general, includes 'programme and content, learning objectives, teaching and learning strategies, organisation and administration, assessment methods, resources, learners' prior experience, language(s) and language use, the relationship between teacher and learner etc.' (Daniel, 2001, p.6). However, in the context of internationalisation, curriculum content also refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that should be developed, how they are assessed, and the teaching and learning processes incorporated in the delivery of an internationalised curriculum. The two main research questions in this thesis are concerned with: what is taught/learned and how is it taught/learned, whether this is through the formal curriculum, informal curriculum or hidden curriculum (Leask & Bridge, 2013), or as other researchers describe as 'formal' and 'operational' aspects of the curriculum (Van der Wende, 1996, p.187; Dunne, 2008) while Banks (2001) refers it to the 'manifest' and 'latent' curriculum. The 'informal' curriculum learning is defined as non-academic and non-course based learning which happens outside the classroom. It is generally voluntary based, including joining social clubs or attending cultural events sponsored by the university (Leask, 2009; de Wit, 2009). In spite of different wording and categorisations of curriculum, the present study only uses the term 'formal' curriculum to describe everything happening in class including program and content, teaching and learning strategies, and assessment methods in the UK HE context, i.e. 'the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study' (Leask, 2015, p.69). The term 'informal' curriculum is used in the present study to describe various extra-curricular activities that happen on campus.

Although generally accepted as a positive development, some researchers view IoC as inappropriate due to the extent to which it is considered to limit the scope of teaching and learning, and hence to damage the 'integrity of the discipline' (Bell, 2004; Clifford & Montgomery, 2017). In contrast, others highlight the benefit of having an internationalised curriculum to challenge 'the existing hierarchies of power and class such as gender, language, ethnicity and ability, etc.' (Daniel, 2001, p.4). This view is in line with Ermenc (2005) who argues that having ethnocentric curricula leads to the social marginalisation of minorities. IoC can contribute to a more

inclusive and equitable university experience as it offers an opportunity for intercultural learning to all students and staff, not just the mobile minority (Wihlborg & Robson, 2017).

Furthermore, from the students' perspective, an internationalised curriculum can provide opportunities for social inclusion and intercultural learning by offering experiences of intercultural interaction (De Vita, 2007; Clifford & Montgomery, 2017), which may lead to better academic performance and the development of students' personalities (Chang & Astin, 1997). Secondly, it can bridge differences among students and unify rather than divide. Thirdly, it can motivate students to think in a broader way and avoid cultural stereotyping on campus or in the larger society. Webb (2007, p.110) further proposes that IoC should promote a range of values such as 'openness, tolerance, and culturally inclusive behaviour' in teaching and learning. Thus, an internationalised curriculum is important in order to 'facilitate the development in all students of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will equip them, as graduates, professionals and citizens of the world to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing and increasing connected global society and in doing so to contribute positively to that society' (Leask, 2011, p.10). The development of intercultural competence can be regarded as a crucial outcome of an internationalised curriculum, requiring a campus/disciplinary environment that motivates the interaction and integration of home and international students (Leask, 2009)<sup>14</sup>.

#### ***2.4.1 Disciplinary variations in approaches to internationalisation at home***

Different to previous research studies in this field, the current study incorporates three different disciplinary views (Engineering, Business, and Education) in order to investigate the notion of IaH at both university and faculty levels comprehensively and to compare students' and staff perspectives from different programmes. Since the nature/paradigm of different programmes can determine and be determined by the design of curriculum content, modes of assessment and ways of delivery, it is important to discuss IoC within different academic contexts rather than in a university as a whole since both staff and students' viewpoints and their experiences can be different.

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<sup>14</sup> Students' academic experiences on intercultural competence will be discussed in 3.5.

Turner and Robson (2008, p.72) argue that 'each degree programme should incorporate an international dimension in its curriculum content'. Similarly, others claim that IaH<sup>15</sup> should be implemented within the different disciplinary, institutional, and national contexts where students are engaged (Childress, 2010; Leask & Beelen, 2010; Leask, 2012). Although international and intercultural elements have been widely acknowledged as important elements in IoC strategy, the nature of knowledge and the nature of disciplinary culture can lead to disciplinary differences in understanding and implementing an IaH agenda. Dune (2011) suggests that the nature of the discipline can largely determine the scope and level of internationalisation within the curriculum. Before moving onto a deeper analysis on how the nature of knowledge determines disciplinary differences, the underpinning theory is introduced.

There are many lenses through which to approach academic fields of study, such as an epistemological perspective or a historical development perspective (Frodeman & Mitchum, 2007). In this study, the Becher typology (1994) was adopted to illustrate disciplinary differences from an epistemological perspective. Becher (1994) modified Biglan's (1973) original six-fold classification of disciplines into a fourfold one and they are known as 'hard-pure' (natural science), 'soft-pure' (humanities and social science), 'hard-applied' (science-based professions) and 'soft-applied' (social professions, e.g. business and education) (see Table 1). Neumann et al. (2002) point out 'hard pure' knowledge is concerned with universals and that therefore the knowledge is linear, quantitative and straightforward. The learning goal for students is to learn facts and to acquire problem-solving skills. Teaching methods are more lectures and seminars based, for example, in physics and mathematics studies. 'Hard applied' knowledge (e.g. engineering) concerns mastery of physical environment and teaching methods are mainly lectures and lab experiments.

On the other hand, the nature of 'soft pure' knowledge is qualitative and iterative (e.g. history). The learning goal is to develop students' creativity in thinking. The instructional methods comprise lectures and tutorials including discussions and debates. In 'soft applied' disciplines (e.g. business and education), the learning tends to focus on personal growth and the field of knowledge is relatively broad. The teaching methods are similar to those in 'soft pure' disciplines, designed to develop

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<sup>15</sup> The concept of IaH was explained in 2.3.

students' critical and creative thinking skills through more class discussions and debates so that different ideas can be reflected upon and shared among students (Braxton, 1995). In terms of modes of assessment, 'soft fields' tend to choose more essay-based evaluation that requires analysis and synthesis of knowledge content while in hard fields, assessment is more exam-based because it requires memorisation and application of the knowledge (Braxton, 1995). The nature of knowledge and the nature of disciplinary culture can largely determine the learning strategy in each discipline and it, therefore, determines the teaching methods and modes of assessment that instructors select.

<b>Disciplinary groupings</b>	<b>Nature of knowledge</b>	<b>Nature of disciplinary culture</b>
Pure science (e.g. Physics): 'hard-pure'	Cumulative; concerned with universal, quantities, simplification;	Gregarious; task-oriented; politically well-organised; high publication rate.
Humanities and pure social science 'soft-pure'	Reiterative; holistic; concerned with particulars, qualities; complication; resulting in understanding/interpretation.	Individualistic; loosely structured; person-oriented; low publication.
Technologies (e.g. Engineering) 'hard-applied'	Purposive; pragmatic; concerned with mastery of physical environment; resulting in products/techniques.	Entrepreneurial; cosmopolitan; dominated by professional values; role-oriented.
Applied social science (e.g. Business and Education): 'soft-applied'	Functional; concerned with enhancement of [semi] professional practice; resulting in protocols/procedures.	Outward-looking; uncertain in status; dominated by intellectual fashions; power-oriented.

Table 1 Knowledge and Culture, by Disciplinary Grouping<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the nature of different disciplines, faculty engagement is also an important factor in the process of internationalisation (Stohl, 2007), which includes consideration of unique disciplinary cultures and faculty members. In essence, to understand the potential for IoC in different disciplines, it may be helpful to regard each discipline as an academic tribe, having its own 'set of intellectual values and way of seeing and understanding the world' (Leask & Bridge, 2013, p.153). Hence, IoC may be perceived differently within different disciplines (Becher, 1994; Childress, 2010; Leask, 2013). For example, in the subjects of management, marketing, and economics, the curriculum is more likely to be internationalised due to the influence

<sup>16</sup> Source: Adapted from Becher (1994).

of globalisation on the study of markets and economics (Appelbaum, et al., 2009; Childress, 2010; Leask, 2013; Crosling, et al., 2008; Van der Wende, 1996). As Kedia et al. (2001) suggest, having a global mind-set and knowledge of international markets and strategies is essential in studying in most business-related courses.

In comparison to 'soft' sciences, the 'hard' sciences are likely to achieve higher levels of internationalisation partly due to the fact that international collaborations in subjects such as science and engineering, etc. have previously been more emphasised and valued than in humanities and social sciences (de Wit & Callan, 1995). Marginson (2011) echoes that globalisation has pushed international education to grow fast especially in vocational programmes such as business, computing, engineering and health science studies. The level of international collaborations in social sciences between overseas universities and other institutions, such as those in China is less evident given the contrast in ideologies, paradigms, and discourses in this field and the high level of language proficiency and effort required to implement IoC (Yang, 2005, p.188). In addition to subject-based pedagogies, others have suggested a more generic approach to IoC with the development of non-disciplinary courses or programmes (Jones & Killick, 2013; Soria & Troisi, 2014; Jones, 2014).

Lecturers in different disciplines play an important role in the IoC process as some argue that 'the crucial factor determining the possibilities for intercultural dialogue among the students is academics' attitudes towards and the ways in which they understand about internationalisation' (Caruana, 2010, p.30). Beelen (2018) highlights the importance of a bottom-up strategy to implement internationalisation directly through programmes and lecturers. A number of studies show that academic staff have notably different levels of engagement in an internationalised curriculum across different disciplines (Harrison, 2015). Researchers claim that staff in humanities and social science disciplines are more open-minded and passionate about changes and innovation in teaching and curriculum content than those in the science and technology fields (Dunne, 2011; Sawir, 2011; Clifford, 2009) and are more likely to show interest in IoC since they recognise the importance of IC as a potential medium to prepare their students for the future job market (Clifford, 2009). Sawir (2011) suggests that staff in soft disciplines tend to make more adjustments in their teaching and curriculum in order to accommodate international students' needs and expectations than those in hard disciplines. Other studies suggest that applied disciplines such as technology, medicine, and engineering are more likely to focus on

developing individual's employability skills that enable them to be graduates qualified to work in different contexts with different regulations. They therefore emphasise the importance of teaching international perspectives in multicultural learning contexts (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014; Sawir, 2011). This is in line with Braxton (1995), who suggests that staff from soft disciplines place greater value on delivering a broad and general education and developing students' characters while staff in the hard disciplines place more attention on equipping students for their future careers needs. However, the pure sciences curriculum may not require adaptation to the needs of home or international students since 'science' can be regarded as universal knowledge that has the same meaning and application around the world (Sawir, 2011; Clifford, 2009). Despite different attitudes that staff may have in terms of having an internationalised curriculum in their programme of teaching, the main challenge of IoC is that teachers should understand the concept of internationalisation, and then engage with it by reflecting on their mind-sets and teaching practises (Sawir, 2011).

There is a growing emphasis on graduate attributes in the literature on IoC. In Australia, many universities have been using graduate attributes as the driver of IoC over the past decade. For example, 'a global outlook' (Jones & Killick, 2013, p.166) or 'a global soul' (Bennet, 2008, p.13) has been adopted by many universities in Australia as one of the graduate attributes that is incorporated into international or intercultural elements in their teaching. In Europe, in order to enrich staff and students' international and intercultural experiences, many universities integrate international and intercultural aspects in mandatory courses in international programmes (Otten, 2003). Internationalisation of the curriculum has come to be regarded as an essential strategy to develop graduates' intercultural competence. However, graduate attributes are relatively new in relation to IoC in the United Kingdom and fewer modules or courses have explicitly incorporated international/intercultural elements (Jones & Killick, 2013). In the following section, the concept of graduate attributes will be further discussed as an aspect of HE internationalisation and the importance of having global graduates who are interculturally competent will be explored in detail from different ideological perspectives.



## 2.5 Global Graduates

In light of internationalisation, producing graduates with 'global' employability skills has become an important responsibility for universities. It is believed that IoC has two main rationales: pragmatically-based or values-based (Leask, 2003, 2005). The former refers to *skills* and *understandings* that students need to be able to work and live in an internationalised world while the latter refers to abilities to tackle issues of social responsibility, ethics, justice, and equality and work for a sustainable future, which has gained a lot of attention in the past few years (Jones & Killick, 2007, 2013; Marginson, 2011). Internationalisation means different things in different contexts, but the focus of this study is former - students' pragmatically-based skills. An increased emphasis on public accountability in HE has led to a requirement for HEIs to show clearly that they are able to produce employable 'global' graduates with core generic skills and attributes (Campbell, 2010). Employability skills are connected to graduate attributes and some authors regard employability skills as a subset of graduate attributes (Baker, 2014). Graduate attributes have been defined as:

'the qualities, skills, and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond, the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses.' (Bowden et al., 2000, p.1)

In addition to the importance of employability skills, the HEA (2016, p.1) endorsed the notion of global citizenship that internationalisation represents in 'the preparation of all UK HE graduates to live in, and contribute to, a globally connected society'.

In light of globalisation, an increasing number of graduates move beyond their countries of origin to seek employment opportunities and they may have to compete with people from all over the world who bring international, intercultural, and global skills to potential jobs (Knight, 2004). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) predicted that half of all globally mobile graduates will come from China and India by 2030 and less than 25 percent from Europe and the United States (Coelen, 2015). The United Nations expects that countries such as Germany, Italy, or Japan would need a few hundred thousand immigrants every year to maintain their current working age population (ages 15 to 64) due to low fertility rates (United Nations, 2011; Mor Barak, 2005). It is highly likely that employers and employees will work with those who share different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in intercultural workplaces in the near future (Coelen, 2015). Even today, many companies in Europe have already started to recruit graduates

from outside of their home country as there is a lack of domestic graduates who fit their job profiles (ibid). From the organisational point of view, today's graduates are expected to be equipped with cosmopolitan skills<sup>17</sup> as both IC and workplace professionals (Yemini, 2014). IC as one of the most important graduate attributes is recognised among many employers and organisations who think that not only the hard technical skills are essential in the workplace, but also soft skills such as interpersonal communication and IC are crucial especially for those who will work in a global environment (Del Vitto, 2008). In order to develop students' IC, some researchers suggest that international mobility is of benefit to enhance their understanding of 'other' cultures and provide transformative experiences (Killick, 2012; Spencer-Oatey, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2013), through international travel, study or work (Schattle, 2007). However, others argue that there is insufficient knowledge on whether IC can be developed simply by being in a multi-cultural environment (Savicki, 2008; Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). Moreover, mobility experiences are only available to a minority of students. Intercultural learning can occur on campus through intentional development and efforts from both students and staff (Turner & Robson, 2008) through both formal curriculum and informal curriculum (Deardorff, 2011). 'Global' graduate skills, competences and outlooks are not only produced through access to international mobility: global graduate attributes can be intentionally developed and evidenced on the home campus.

I have so far discussed how graduate attributes drive the development of IC and why employable 'global' graduates are urgently needed by many organisations and employers. The importance of developing IC as one of the graduate attributes to prepare students to function well in an increasingly interconnected world has also been emphasised. In the next sub-section, a less discussed but important conceptualisation, 'an internationalised self' is explored with respect to existential internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and global citizenship. The discussion of these concepts highlights the crucial role that intercultural competence plays in this globalised world and the responsibility of universities to produce intercultural competent graduates with employability and global citizenship skills, competences and outlooks.

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<sup>17</sup> Cosmopolitanism will be discussed more fully later in the chapter, with references to Rizvi, Killick and others to expand the discussion.

### **2.5.1 An internationalised self**

In the process of globalisation, existential internationalism argues the importance of internationalising the self in order to live better in the fast changing world. This involves not only understanding the Cultural Other and knowing the unknown, but also most importantly understanding oneself. As Stromquist (2002) states ‘...before we can recognise the Other, we have to know ourselves well’, which resonates with Breuer’s (2002) suggestion that ‘only when we have clearly defined our own person and identity are we able to understand other identities’ (p.15). In light of globalisation and internationalisation, education in contemporary society involves teaching not only technical skills or vocational skills, but also equipping students with the ability to live and work in a world where traditional national borders are gradually replaced by McLuhan’s vision of ‘global village’ (Sanderson, 2004; McLuhan & Powers, 1991). In line with Sanderson’s (2004) ‘existentialism’, the concept of cosmopolitanism was further developed in response to the increasingly interconnected and interdependent nature of our world (Rizvi, 2009). Rizvi (2008) suggests that cosmopolitan learning should develop students’ ‘epistemic virtues’ or abilities to learn about other cultures and themselves. Cosmopolitan learning involves understanding others both in their terms as well as ours as a way of comprehending how both representations are social constituted’ (ibid., p. 266). This aligns with Sanderson’s belief in the importance of knowing self.

Killick (2012) interprets ‘global citizenship’ as an indicator of how people see themselves in the world, shaping their inclinations and will to act in the world. More specifically, Israel, Miller, and Reed (2011, p. 309) suggest that global citizenship ‘involves a sense of self that is grounded in specific places (home, communities or nations), while also being conscious of those commitments in the broader context of global belonging and global collaboration’. This term is closely intertwined with cosmopolitanism and both stem from the same origin ‘the citizen of the world’ (Skrbiš, 2014). Importantly, Killick (2012) also addressed the importance of recognising otherness and identifying self in developing one’s IC, which is in line with existentialism and cosmopolitanism. McRae and Ramji (2011, p. 347) propose that ‘in today’s globalised world, no matter what path students choose to take in their career upon graduation, they will be living and working in a culturally diverse setting.’ Their accounts pinpoint that the ability to live and work in a culturally diverse world, to be interculturally competent, is becoming increasingly important. A close interconnection between the concepts of global citizenship and intercultural

competence emerges (Trede, Bowles, & Bridges, 2013). This study situates intercultural competence as an important learning outcome of higher education internationalisation necessary for students to fulfil their future global citizenship responsibilities when living and working in an increasingly globalised society. Although global citizenship and intercultural competence are closely related, the term 'global citizenship' is contested in the literature. Some researchers regard it as a new form of colonialism (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014). In Clifford and Montgomery's (2014) study, findings from 104 tertiary academic staff from ten countries suggest that the concept of global citizenship can be problematic in capitalist societies, and requires a curriculum change that goes beyond Western dominant knowledge. Similarly, Dower (2008) maintains that 'global citizenship is largely a privileged status of rich Northerners and a product of their wealth, leisure, opportunities and access' (p. 39). On the other hand, global citizenship can mean that individuals identify the world as their home and believe in values such as openness and tolerance (Shultz, 2007). The concept of 'intercultural competence' is selected as the focus in this thesis which explores students' IC development during their postgraduate taught studies<sup>18</sup>.

The responsibility of HE has been reviewed above in terms of what types of graduates should be produced in order to meet the demands of the increasingly connected global workplace. From an ethical or values-based perspective, IC is not only a 'global' attribute, but also the ability to understand cultural 'others', to know 'oneself' and to be open to developing one's own identity. Therefore, this study adopted a self-report psychometric inventory (i.e. Multicultural Personality Questionnaire) to measure students' IC development, taking into account their academic, sociocultural experiences in an internationalised university setting where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds are gathered together<sup>19</sup>. In addition to readiness for the workplace, the global graduate with intercultural competence can also make a contribution to their local community and to broader society. This section has addressed the interconnection between global citizenship and intercultural competence. In the following chapter, students' IC as a significant learning outcome influenced by internationalisation is reviewed, from the definitions and components of

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<sup>18</sup> More detail about intercultural competence can be found in Chapter 3.

<sup>19</sup> More detail about the inventory can be found in 3.3.2.

IC to the contributory factors that lead to students' development of IC, followed by a discussion of a conceptual framework of this study.

## **2.6 Concluding Remarks**

Drawing from the IoHE framework developed by the Higher Education Academy (2014), the literature review has been framed around three interrelated dimensions (organisation, curriculum, and people). With the status quo of internationalisation and marketisation in the UK HE industry, the chapter firstly reviewed the economic imperative that was the most significant driver of the development of internationalisation in UK HE in the past decades. However, a focus on the recruitment of international students as a major source of income can be regarded as a limitation of internationalisation strategies. International students enrich the learning environment and opportunities for internationalisation to be perceived and enacted as a process of developing students' IC. This requires a more value-based approach to internationalisation of HE.

## Chapter 3. Conceptualising Intercultural Competence

### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the pivotal role of IC was reviewed from three aspects: the university's internationalisation strategy, internationalisation of the curriculum and the internationalised self. The ultimate goal of universities is to produce intercultural competent graduates who can contribute to their local communities and nations and hence IC as a learning outcome of internationalisation of higher education plays an important role in today's day and age (Deardorff, 2006). In this chapter, a review of the literature related to IC development, as well as pre-course and in-course factors (academic and sociocultural experiences) that affect IC was conducted for the university student population. Students' intercultural learning experiences in HE have become the subject of a number of research studies in the past two decades (Bedenlier et al., 2017). Intercultural learning is also regarded as a desired outcome of an internationalised curriculum (Ippolito, 2007). There are a growing number of studies on IaH that focus on students' and staff experiences and perceptions (Amit, 2010; Barnick, 2010; Hendrickson et al., 2011). Although scholars claim that internationalisation benefits both home and international students who are studying on campus, comparatively few studies have examined how all students benefit from HE internationalisation and population diversity (Denson & Zhang, 2010).

Therefore, this present study investigates both home and international students' experiences through the lens of IaH. The rationale for this approach is that an international experience should be available to, and valued by, both home and international students at the home campus. In addition, as IC has been widely discussed as a student's learning outcome of internationalisation (Deardorff, 2006), the study explores how IC has been facilitated or hindered by students' intercultural experience in the host university, and how it can be influenced by their pre-course factors and academic, socio-cultural experiences (see Figure 3). More specifically, pre-sojourn factors have been regarded as important contributory factors in developing students' IC (Berry, 2006; Young & Schartner, 2014). In-sojourn factors are those factors arising from students' academic and socio-cultural experiences at the host university that may develop their IC (Young & Schartner, 2014). As the term sojourn does not capture the experiences of both mobile and non-mobile students, pre-course and in-course were therefore used in this research to study both home and international students' intercultural adaptation. The division of these two

categorises are essential in conducting this research study, which is further discussed in section 3.4 and 3.5.

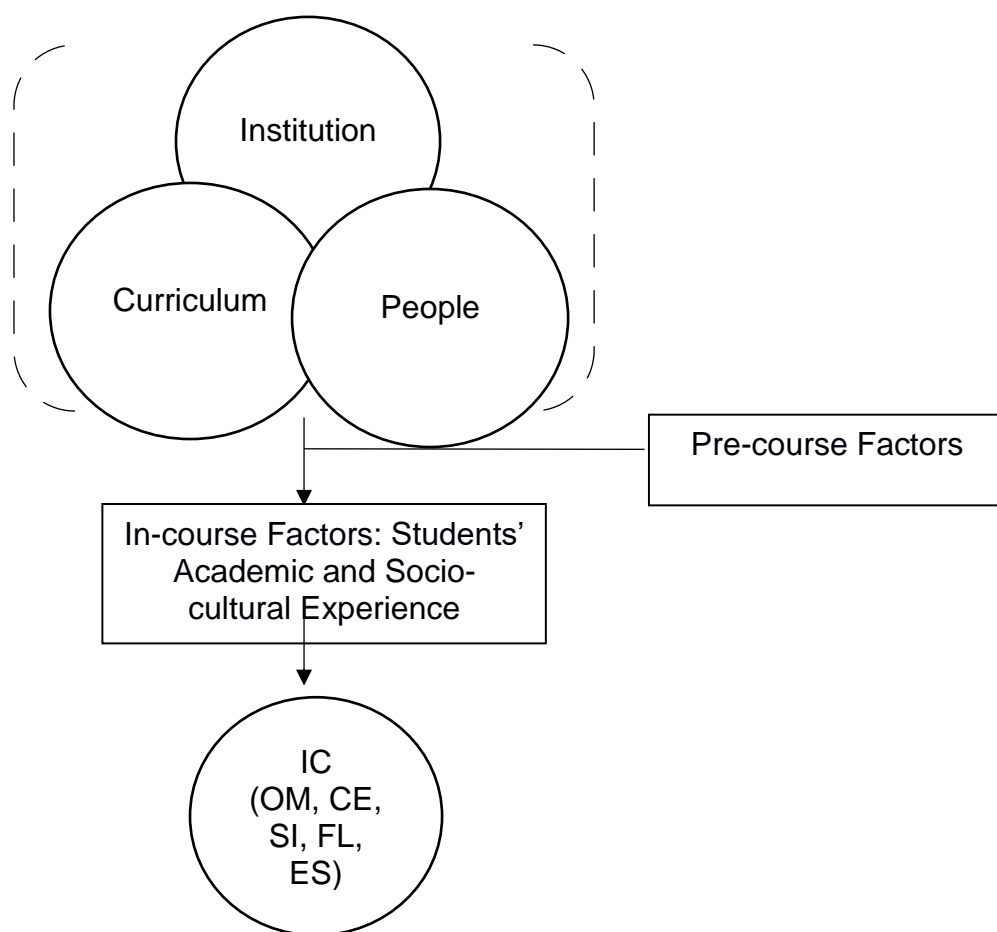


Figure 3 Two-dimension Factors Influencing on Students' IC<sup>20</sup>

In the first part of this chapter, definitions, components, and assessment tools of IC are firstly explored (section 3.2), followed by the theories underpinning the study (section 3.3). The influence of students' pre-course factors on their development of IC and their intercultural experiences, including their prior overseas experience, learning motives and their host language proficiency are specifically investigated (section 3.4). In the second part, home and international students' perceptions in terms of their intercultural experiences are explored and compared from academic and socio-cultural aspects (section 3.5). A number of strategies have been used in searching for relevant studies in the Web of Science database and Google Scholar. Terms such as 'international students', 'student experience', and 'intercultural

<sup>20</sup> Adapted from Gu et al., 2010.

competence'<sup>21</sup> have been covered. After gaining general knowledge in this field of study, some most frequently cited authors and publications and the collaborative authorship were particularly searched. This chapter reviewed some of the key authors in the IC and intercultural adaptation studies (e.g. Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Deardorff, 2004, 2006; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001; Kim, 1988, 2001; Lysgaard, 1955; Berry, 2006; Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Gu et al., 2010; Young & Schartner, 2014). A more detailed summary can be found in Appendix G.

### **3.2 Intercultural Competence and Assessment**

The previous chapter has reviewed internationalisation of higher education and how intercultural competence situates in the internationalisation process. Based on this, the present section aims to study IC in more detail including its definitions and components. It reviews the most popular definitions from prominent intercultural researchers, including Deardorff (2004), Fantini (2000, 2009), Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000, 2001), Knight (2008), and Hammer (1989). The discussion of IC also paves way for the IC assessment adopted in this study – the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, one of the most popular and well-established IC tests (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Basow & Gaugler, 2017).

#### **3.2.1 Definitions of intercultural competence**

The term 'intercultural competence' first emerged in the 1950s; it was originally used to study those who worked abroad and their experiences of communication problems, particularly with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). In the later 1970s, the context of IC research was extended to students studying abroad, expatriates' cross-cultural training, and immigrant's acculturation. In the previous chapter, the term 'intercultural competence' was broadly discussed as a significant attribute in global graduates that many organisations and employers look for. Drawing from an extensive literature in IC studies, it has recently been widely discussed in the field of international students' adaptation and adjustment when they study abroad (Williams, 2005; Young & Schartner, 2014). However, in this study, IC is viewed as students' outcome of

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<sup>21</sup> Alternative terms such as intercultural communicative competence, cross-cultural communication, and cross-cultural adaptation, etc. were all searched.



internationalisation on the host campus, which is the competence that is highly required in living and working in this increasingly connected world. In this section, definitions, components and assessment tools of IC are discussed in more detail.

IC is hard to define as there has been a lack of clarity and consensus over the term (Deardorff, 2006; Moeller & Nugent, 2014). One definition that was proposed by Deardorff (2004, p.194) has been widely adopted by researchers, which is 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes'. Based on this definition, she also proposed a framework of IC, which captures the developmental process of IC, including required attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcome, and external outcome. Nevertheless, Deardorff (2006) note that most of the definitions of IC are rather general and lack specificity on the particular abilities and attributes of IC. The UK's Higher Education Academy defines IC as 'those knowledge, skills, and attitudes that comprise a person's ability to get along with, work and learn with people from diverse cultural backgrounds' (HEA, 2013, p.3).

In addition to broadly categorising IC into knowledge, skills and attitudes, other researchers clarify specific components of IC such as intercultural attitudes of curiosity, openness and respect (Deardorff, 2006) and intercultural behaviours or awareness (Fantini, 2000), personal characteristics or personality traits (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), or adjustment to the new cultural environment (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). The importance of communication skills (Ting-Toomey, 1999) and language proficiency (Ewington, Lowe, & Trickey, 2007; Fantini, 2000) have also been emphasised as vital aspects of a set of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and characteristics that support people's interaction in different cultural contexts (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Bennett, 2008). Bennett (2008) further conceptualises this as an 'internationalised mindset' and an 'intercultural skillset' that enable individuals to assimilate and reflect cultural knowledge from their own experiences of intercultural encounters and to connect within the current situation by analysing interactions and adapting behaviours accordingly, while maintaining curiosity and respect for cultural difference and otherness.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that IC may be referred to through the use of other terms in different contexts in the literature, such as 'intercultural communication competence' (Spitzberg, 1994; Hammer et al., 1978), 'intercultural effectiveness' (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978), 'cultural intelligence' (Earley & Peterson, 2004), 'cross-cultural adaptation' (Kim, 1991), and 'global mind-set' (Bird, Osland, &

Lane, 2004) (there are many more). In spite of the different wordings and emphasis, the general definitions of IC that are expressed seemingly parallel each other, where being an intercultural citizen who is able to work and live in the increasingly connected world is given importance (Knight, 2008). Most terms tend to limit the aspects of the complexity of such a phenomenon, for example global mind-set, cross-cultural awareness, cultural competence, and intercultural interaction (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). These terms are used to stress only one aspect, such as awareness, sensitivity, or certain skills, however, since it refers to a more complex set of abilities, the term IC is used throughout the study to maintain consistency and to avoid any confusion. It can be difficult to address all of the IC components in one research study with a single instrument (Fantini, 2009). However, the rationales to investigate IC is to recognise its importance to prepare sojourners to effectively function in an internationalised environment where people around them have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, instead of focusing on specific abilities or dimensions, the present study uses Fantini and Tirmizi's definition as the reference to view IC as 'a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself' (2006, p.12), in combining with the definition proposed by Gudykunst and Kim (2003, p. 17) who conceptualise IC as '...a transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures.' This means that IC in this study is viewed as a set of abilities developed during the 'process' rather than an encounter<sup>22</sup>. This definition concurs with Jones (2019) who refers to the concept of 'interculturalisation', suggesting that 'the international, multicultural attitudes vital for living and working in diverse environments can be developed without travelling abroad'. However, in the present study, the understanding of IC goes beyond a focus on attitudes but also focus on abilities. Attitudes and abilities not only contribute to intercultural effectiveness, but also psychological well-being that relates to one's disposition and mindset (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). In the following section, the measurement of IC is reviewed and discussed.

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<sup>22</sup> The word 'encounter' was adopted from Stier's (2006) research article.

### 3.2.2 Multicultural personality questionnaire

Due to the complexity of IC, there are a number of ways to measure it for different research purposes and the best way to assess it is by multiple measures on multiple dimensions with a mixed method<sup>23</sup> (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009). Drawing from the literature, IC is mostly assessed by psychometric instruments (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012, see table 2). Psychometrics concerns the theory and technique of psychological measurement, including the assessment of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, beliefs, and personality traits (Sampson, & Smith, 1957). The field primarily studies the differences between individuals (Nunnally, 1978). For example, as one of the most popular instruments that measures IC, IDI consists of six stages of worldview change from denial to integration. It is designed to measure individuals' worldview structure change, where their changed behaviours and attitudes at each stage are indicative of the state of their underlying worldview. Therefore, it is not a simple measurement of attitudes and behaviour change, it is fundamentally a measurement of psychological change. Different to the IDI that measures one's attitudes and behaviours in order to predict IC development, the MPQ measures individuals' personality traits that are essential in developing intercultural effectiveness. White (1959) and Kealey and Protheroe (1996) claim that intercultural effectiveness is not only about functioning in a new culture, but also general psychological well-being in a new cultural environment. The above two examples show the importance of measuring IC with psychometrics instruments.

<b>Tests for IC</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)	Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003)
Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)	van der Zee and van Oudenhoven (2000)
Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)	Arasaratnam (2009)
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	Ang, Van Dyne, and Koh (2006)
Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale (CCSS)	Pruegger and Rogers (1993)
Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)	Kelley and Meyers (1995)
Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS)	Matsumoto and colleagues (2001)

Table 2 Assessments for IC

<sup>23</sup> Detailed methodology was presented in chapter 4.

On the other hand, IC has also been measured by many qualitative methods such as interviews and reflective writing (Spooner-Lane et al., 2013) since it is believed that a qualitative approach can better capture the individual differences and provide more in-depth data. However, intercultural scholars (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009) highlighted that a mixed-methods assessment of multiple dimensions can be more accurate and holistic to measure the complex concept of IC. It has, therefore, become a more popular method to gauge IC in recent years. Many researchers (Schartner, 2016; Riley, Bustamante, & Edmonson, 2016; Tompkins et al., 2017) have shown their preferences for the mixed methods approach in their studies<sup>24</sup>.

As one of the well-developed and valid instruments, the MPQ has been widely used in measuring international students' adaptation and IC development to date (Young et al., 2013; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012; Leong, 2007). In addition, it has often been used for the following purposes: firstly, as a personality measurement, it can be adopted to assess participants' multicultural effectiveness as a criteria of IC operating in a new cultural environment, or the feeling of psychological wellbeing studying in a new cultural environment or their interest in and ability to deal with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Secondly, it can also be used to predict participants' international and intercultural vocational interests, as well as international orientation (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). Thirdly, as Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) have stated, the MPQ may be used as an instrument for selecting suitable expatriates or as a tool for assessing further training needs or assessing some training modules.

A considerable body of research focuses on the relation between personality and multicultural success, where personality is seen as an important predictor for having successful intercultural experiences and adaptation (Deller, 1997; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009; Shaffer et al., 2006; Bird et al., 2010; Ramalu et al., 2012; Downes et al., 2010; Kim & Slocum, 2008). Research suggests that individuals' personality, to a great extent, determines their perceptions towards intercultural situations as threatening or non-threatening while influencing whether or not individuals are capable of having appropriate behavioural reactions to such intercultural situations (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007). For example, if someone is open-minded towards differences, they may not perceive the presence of

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<sup>24</sup> More information about mixed methods approach can be found in 4.1.2

different cultures as threatening, they can therefore have better behavioural reactions when encountering or interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Personality, on the other hand, can be influenced by environmental factors. Furthermore, personality traits can also influence one's job performance (Barrick et al., 1998). Numerous studies have shown that personality traits, such as agreeableness, openness and extraversion are associated with positive social interaction, which foster cooperation with other team members (Judge, & Zapata, 2015; Barrick, & Mount, 1991). In addition, some psychometric instruments, such as the MPQ are widely used as tools to evaluate training programmes by measuring the change of one's behaviours and attitudes as part of one's personality before and after training (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). For example, in Herfst, Van Oudenhoven, and Timmerman's (2008) study, the MPQ was used to evaluate material for a new intercultural effectiveness training instrument with 21 critical incidents. The positive reactions have shown an effectiveness of the material in intercultural training.

The development of the MPQ has been influenced by the Big Five framework<sup>25</sup> – a general personality questionnaire which has been widely used in personality and cross-cultural transition studies previously (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004; Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005), but it has been argued that it is too broad to predict one's behaviour in multicultural situations, as compared to more specific traits (Ashton, 1998; Hough, 1992). The MPQ, therefore, was designed to cover more narrow aspects of broader traits that are relevant to intercultural success (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). It was originally measured from seven scales: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Emotional Stability, Orientation to Action, Adventurousness/Curiosity, Flexibility, and Extraversion, which were the factors that believed to be relevant to the success of international assignees. After van der Zee and van Oudenhoven's work (2000, 2001, 2002), the MPQ has been narrowed and constructed for five dimensions (91-item) that are of relevance of intercultural success: Open-mindedness (OM), Cultural Empathy (CE), Social Initiative (SI), Emotional Stability (ES), and Flexibility (FL). These five factors were derived from an extensive literature review on intercultural and cross-cultural studies.

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<sup>25</sup> The Big Five is seen as one of the strongest theoretically supported models in trait psychology (Migliore, 2011).

Regarding the reliability and validity of the instrument, internal consistencies for the five elements among international student samples are believed to be satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha from 0.74 to 0.87 in Yakunina et al. (2013), from 0.71 to 0.82 in Young et al. (2013). The stability of the instrument is high and only slightly lower than those basic personality questionnaires, such as the Big Five (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000). The MPQ-Short Form (40-item) was developed based on the original MPQ scales and it is believed to have a high correlation to the original one (van der Zee et al., 2013). This is the questionnaire that the present study adopts. Each subscale of the MPQ is introduced in more detail below:

Open-mindedness (OM) is defined as 'an open and unprejudiced attitude towards outgroup members and towards different cultural norms and values' (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, p.294). Individuals who have a higher level of OM personality trait tend to have less fixed mind-set of what is right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, and hence are more likely to accept the new culture (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978). Some researchers claim that OM as an attitudinal aspect of IC can be changed by studying abroad (e.g. Carlson & Widaman, 1988). Williams and Johnson (2011, p.46) echo that 'OM is not a static trait, but an attitude or stance which can be cultivated with appropriate education and experience'. Gu, Schweisfurth and Day (2010) support the claim by indicating international students become more positive about the host culture and more acceptable of people who share different attitudes and values after studying abroad. Moreover, Wolff and Kim (2012) propose that OM is related to sojourners' networking skills. This suggests that if sojourners experience the new culture and values of the host country, they are likely to have a positive attitude towards cultural differences. Some researchers point out the positive relationship between OM and the ability to adjust and perform well in international settings (Arthur & Bennett, 1995) while others imply an opposite result (e.g. Caligiuri, 2000). OM was believed to be improved during sojourn, however in some longitudinal studies (e.g. Young & Scharfner, 2014; Van Bakel et al., 2015), it was suggested that OM had significantly dropped over time, for reasons such as initial high expectations (Herrera, 2012), or negative experiences in multicultural group work (Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Haneda, 2014; Summers & Volet, 2008), or overestimation at T1 (Dunning et al., 2003), or underestimation at T2.

Cultural Empathy (CE), also referred to as sensitivity (Hawes & Kealey, 1981), is defined as 'the capacity to clearly project an interest in others, as well as to

obtain and to reflect a reasonably complete and accurate sense of another's thoughts, feelings, and/or experiences' (Ruben, 1976). It means the 'ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of members of different cultural groups' (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, p.294). It has been identified as an important dimension of IC (Arthur & Bennett, 1995; Deardorff, 2006). In previous studies, empathy has been seen as a motivational construct (Wiseman et al., 1989), a stable competence (Bird et al., 2010), or as other intercultural scholars emphasised that it is something that can also be developed and trained (Hammer et al., 2003). In Peltokorpi and Froese's (2011) research study, they investigated 181 expatriates who work in Japan and proposed a positive association between CE and their general adjustment. This means that expatriates with a higher score on CE adjust better to interact with locals, work, and activities than those with a low level of CE. Likewise, Williams and Johnson (2010) conduct research on 80 U.S. American local students with the MPQ and they found that international friendships have a positive correlation to one's OM, but fail to show any association to other multicultural attitudes, such as CE, SI, ES and FL. Previous study shows that females tend to score higher on CE than males due to the reason that CE contains 'feminine behaviours' such as listening and feeling for others, as per Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra (2003). However, in Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's (2000) study, gender differences were not identified as an influencing factor on this trait.

Social Initiative (SI) where individuals have the tendency to approach social activities in an active way and take initiative, has been developed based on Extroversion from the Big Five (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001). It is often classified as a behavioural aspect, which focuses on the ability to establish interpersonal relationships and maintain contact (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978). It is believed that people with high SI are likely to establish social networks and have effective work relationships with locals or other sojourners (Caligiuri, 2000; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2012; Black & Gregersen, 1999). A study in Tokyo shows that expatriates with psychological problems are often introverts who do not like to spend time or receive support from other expatriates or locals (Skuja & Norton, 1982). A study in Taiwan argues that SI correlates to one's psychological wellbeing (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2003). In a similar vein, a comparison study between Singaporean undergraduates who participated in an overseas exchange program (N=166), and those who did not (N=122) was conducted at T1 and T2 (Leong, 2007). The result shows that an

increase on SI subscale predicted a significant decrease in students' socio-cultural and psychological difficulties. It seems that SI is positively associated with sojourners' psychological adjustment and social-cultural adjustment (Basow & Gaugler, 2017). Nevertheless, a study conducted by Van Erp et al. (2011) suggest that a low score on SI is not necessarily contribute to a low level of adjustment. Bird et al. (2010) on other hand argue that SI is, in essence, related to relationship interest or interpersonal engagement and hence it can be a more stable component in IC to be changed or trained. In accordance with Yakunina et al. (2012), SI and ES have a direct impact on sojourners' adjustment but these two traits are difficult to change as they are established personality. Yakunina and colleagues (2012) also believed that students score low on SI and ES require assistance to manage their stress caused by studying abroad. Furthermore, Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) firstly compared home with international students on their SI and adjustment. They found that home students have a higher score on SI than international students and it may be caused the fact that international students experience more distress when facing a new environment at the beginning of their studies than home students, which caused lower subjective wellbeing.

Emotional Stability (ES) aims to measure whether sojourners' have the ability to remain calm in stressful situations (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Although the concept is often mentioned as a personality trait in psychology, Hammer et al. (1978) consider it as a behavioural aspect of IC, which can therefore be developed over time. However, Yakunina et al. (2012) argue that ES is difficult to change as it has already been established in the early years. Previous studies show that females tend to score lower on ES, but it is not clear whether it is a matter of male reluctance to express difficulties and struggles, or if they are inherently less emotional than their female counterparts (Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). In addition, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) suggest that sojourners who perceive intercultural situations as threatening rather than challenging tend to have lower scores on ES.

Flexibility (FL) is the ability to switch easily from one thing to another because the familiar ways of dealing with things will not necessarily work in a new cultural environment (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Moreover, sojourners should not be afraid of the new and unknown environment but should feel attracted to novelty and new situations as a challenge rather than a threat (Van der Zee et al., 2003). This dimension is sometimes called behavioural FL and is seen as the skills



component of IC that can be trained (Wiseman, 2002) while Matveev and Yamazaki (2014) view FL as a cognitive development that is hard to be changed in the short-term. However, Deardorff (2006) regards it as an internal outcome of IC, and therefore it can be learned. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) argue that a low score in FL is associated with sojourners who perceive the uncertain intercultural situations as threatening, and they also tend to experience more negative feelings in the stressful situations than sojourners who score higher on FL. Likewise, researchers (Wang, 2009; Taft, 1981) suggest that people's personality traits such as FL can bring positive impact on their adjustment, however, Yakunina et al. (2013) argue that FL has a weak and indirect association with sojourners' adjustment.

Drawing from the MPQ literature, the MPQ is frequently used to measure international sojourners' IC development rather than the host nationals' (Ward, 2001; Leong, 2007). It is believed that the MPQ is more applicable to predict international cohort's performance than host cohorts' since it is more predictive for sojourners who need adjustment to new and unfamiliar intercultural situations (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Host cohorts, on the contrary, are seen as those who experience less change regarding the environment. Although personality characteristics are seen as very stable in most cases (Van Bakel et al., 2014), Ardeli (2000, p.393) suggests that 'personality may be relatively stable across time due to a stable environment', implying that a change in environment may result in a change in an individual's personality accordingly. More specifically, for international sojourners, their living and studying environments have been altered drastically in a sense that their personality may also be changed to a certain degree (Van Bakel et al., 2014), which may not be the case for home students since researchers believed that home students do not experience cross-cultural border transitions, and hence they are not expected to experience any adaptation and adjustment problems.

However, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) utilised the MPQ to measure students sample from a Dutch college (98% participants are Dutch nationality), and they found that students' motivations to go abroad and multicultural activities have substantial associations with the MPQ subscales. Furthermore, Leone et al. (2005) studied local students from both Italy (N=421) and Netherlands (N=419) and found that the MPQ is positively associated with socio-cultural adjustment, psychological wellbeing of international students, as well as their job satisfaction and multicultural activity. In Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee's study (2002), they measured and compared both international and home students' IC with the MPQ

scales respectively. Participants were international and home students of an international business school (N=171) in the Netherlands. They surprisingly found that native participants are likely to have a higher level of means in all five subscales<sup>26</sup>, particularly for the OM and CE. This result may be caused by a high level of distress and anxiety that international students experienced when they first start their course in a foreign country (ibid). On the contrary, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) revealed that international students rated higher scores for SI, OM, FL, and ES than home students. Table 3 summarises previous studies utilising the MPQ to investigate student's IC in different populations.

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Research design</b>
Mol, Van Oudenhoven & Van Der Zee (2001)	International high school students in Taiwan (N=205)	Longitudinal
Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee (2002)	International Business students in the Netherlands (N=171)	Longitudinal
Van Oudenhoven, Mol & Van der Zee (2003)	Expatriates in Taiwan (N=102)	Cross-sectional
Ali, Van der Zee & Sanders (2003)	Expatriate spouses in 29 countries (N=247)	Cross-sectional
Leong (2007)	Singaporean undergraduates students on an exchange programme (N=166)	Longitudinal
Williams & Johnson (2010)	US American students at a mid-size Southern University (N=80)	Cross-sectional
Peltokorpi & Froese (2012)	International expatriates in Japan (N=181)	Cross-sectional
Yakunina et al. (2012)	International students in the US (N=336)	Cross-sectional
Woods et al. (2013)	Pre-university college international students in an Australian university (N=163)	Longitudinal
Young et al. (2013)	International students in MA programmes in the UK (N=102)	Cross-sectional
Bakel, Gerritsen & Van Oudenhoven (2014)	Western expatriates in Netherlands (N=65)	Longitudinal
Young & Schartner (2014)	International students from CCC in a UK university (N=352)	Longitudinal
Schartner (2016)	International postgraduates students in Humanities and social science at a British university (N=223)	Longitudinal

<sup>26</sup> The MPQ was only conducted once at the start of the academic year, therefore the possible outcomes only valid at that point. The MPQ was the original 78-item one.

Table 3 Previous Studies Using the MPQ to Investigate IC Development

Although many studies in recent years were looking at international students' IC development with the MPQ and ignoring home students' experiences (Leong, 2007; Young & Schartner, 2014), in fact home students also have been studied with the use of MPQ in the early years, particularly in Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's work (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Leone et al., 2005). With the increasing attention on international students' adaptation in intercultural settings, home students, on the other hand, received relatively less attention. However, in light of internationalisation, home students also face studying in an increasingly intercultural environment, so it is worth conducting research on both cohorts who have been equally affected by the process of internationalisation. Therefore, this study is particularly interested in investigating both international and native cohorts for their development of IC and looking into the differences and similarities in their academic and socio-cultural experiences that facilitate or hinder their development of IC. Secondly, the study aims to explore the students' IC development from an interdisciplinary perspective, a comparison among students from Business, Education, and Engineering disciplines.

In sum, the MPQ was selected in this study for the following reasons: firstly, the MPQ has been successfully used to measure sojourners' IC development in the previous studies both longitudinally and cross-sectionally (see table 3). Secondly, the internal consistencies for the five subscales among student samples are high (Young et al., 2013; Yakunina et al., 2012). Thirdly, research studies (Young & Schartner, 2014) have been utilised the MPQ to monitor exclusively postgraduate student samples' IC changes over time. In the following section, relevant theoretical frameworks have been introduced in IC studies.

### **3.3 Theoretical Frameworks**

In this section, some of the most popular models on sojourner intercultural experience studies are presented, which served as the underpinning theories for studies on students' intercultural adaptation in this thesis. It includes the ABC model of culture shock (Ward et al., 2001), the U-curve model (Lysgaard, 1955), and the intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954).

### **3.3.1 ABC model of culture shock**

In the literature, the ABC model (Ward et al., 2001) was widely adopted by researchers in the sojourner adaptation studies. 'Culture shock' has since been studied beyond the perspective of mental health, more from the social psychological and academic perspectives. It was seen as a contested term that caused a lot of discussions in the literature and there is no clear definition to explain this term (Furnham, 2004). However, Oberg (1960) describes it as feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, for example, feelings of homesickness and helplessness, fear of host contacts, and concerns about social activities. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2011) distinguished three different theories of adaptation based on affective, behavioural and cognitive approaches (ABC): 'stress and coping' (e.g. Berry, 1997), 'culture learning' (Argyle, 1980), and 'social identification' (Phinney, 1990).

The 'stress and coping' theory considers 'culture shock' from an individual's psychological wellbeing in adapting to stressful life-changing events, referring to the affective element of the ABC model. Researchers suggested that if coping strategies are applied properly, sojourners experience less 'culture shock' during sojourn whereas insufficient coping resources can result in a higher level of 'culture shock' and anxiety (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In this framework, both sojourner's personality traits and situational factors can be important in the process of adaptation (Ward et al., 2001). Influencing variables include personal factors such as personality and life change (Ward & Kennedy, 1993), and situational factors such as social support (Adelman, 1988).

In the 'culture learning theory', 'culture shock' stems from individuals' acquisition of specific culture skills in order to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, referring to the behavioural element. This was developed from Argyle's (1969) studies on social skills and communication behaviours. This adaptation process tend to be influenced by the following variables: knowledge about the host culture (Ward & Searle, 1991), length of stay in the host country (Ward et al., 1998), language proficiency (Furnham, 1993), social contacts with host nationals (Bochner, 1982), friendship networking (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977), and prior overseas experience (Klineberg & Hull, 1979).

In addition to the 'stress and coping' and 'culture learning' theories, the 'social identification' framework is understood as the cognitive component of the adaptation, including pre-sojourn expectations (Pitts, 2009) and intergroup attitudes

or stereotypes (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983). It concerns the issues on how people perceive themselves and other in-group and out-group members (Ward et al., 2001).

### 3.3.2 U-curve model

One of the most popular and classic models in describing sojourner intercultural experience is the U-curve model (Lysgaard, 1955), which consists of four stages including the initial phase of 'honeymoon' characterised by feelings of excitement and optimism, followed by a 'cultural shock' stage with feelings of frustration, and ending with a phase of regained confidence towards a successful adaptation to the new culture (see Figure 4). Based on the U-curve model, other researchers adapted and extended it into other forms to better describe the intercultural experience that sojourners undergo, such as the W-shaped model (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) which includes the readjustment stage after sojourner return home and they tend to undergo a similar adjustment process to U-curve.

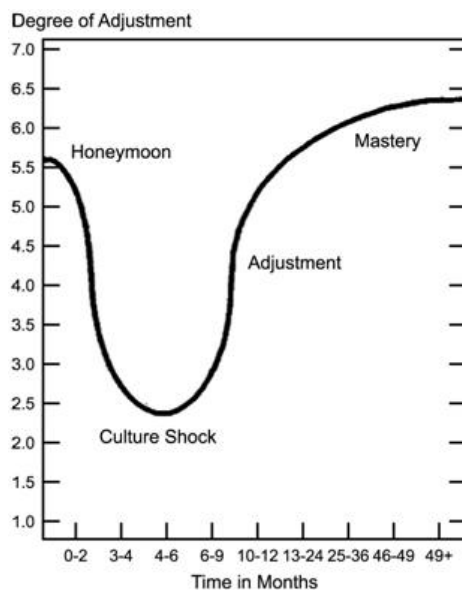


Figure 4 The U-curve Model of Sojourner Intercultural Experience<sup>27</sup>

However, there is little empirical literature to support these models (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013). As Ward et al. (2001) state, although both U-curve and W-shaped models are classic and popular in describing sojourner's intercultural experience, the evidence has been 'weak, inclusive, and overgeneralised' (p.80). Many empirical studies, in fact, prove that the majority of student sojourners experience more cultural

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<sup>27</sup> Source: Ward et al., 1998.

shock and stress particularly at the very beginning of their sojourn and this negative feeling decrease over time (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Ward et al., 2001; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007), which contradicts the idea of the U-curve and W-shaped pattern's honeymoon initial phase. This result is supported by other researchers who claim that instead of initial excitement, international students tend to report some certain degree of loneliness at the initial stage which can cause the feeling of anxiety and frustration but things get better as time goes by (Zhou & Todman, 2009). In Brown and Holloway's (2008) qualitative research study, they interviewed 13 international postgraduate students who study at a university in England and they found that international students experienced the most stressful moment at the initial stage, characterised by culture shock. Similar to a study conducted by McLachlan and Justice (2009), they interviewed 20 international students who studied at a US university and discovered that most of the international students experience tremendous difficulties in the first six to twelve months. Since the interview data can be subjective and students perceive their experiences differently based on their personal and unique experience, it is hard to reach any consensus on the pattern of students' intercultural experiences.

In addition, one of the greatest criticisms of the U-curve model is that the theory is generally a description of different phases of adjustment rather than a theoretical framework of how and why student sojourners change from one stage to another (Berardo, 2007). Little has been known on why the honeymoon stage exists, what factors contribute to sojourners' feelings of cultural shock and what supports them to experience and cope with the new culture at a different stage. In the literature, several stressors that can cause sojourn adaptation have been discussed, such as language barrier (Chen, 1999; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), academic stress (Hashim & Yang, 2003; Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003), social contact and friendship (Townsend & Poh, 2008; Brisset et al., 2010), discrimination (Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopes, 2007). Further studies on the academic and socio-cultural stress and challenges that related to student intercultural experience were discussed in 3.4 and 3.5.

### **3.3.3 Contact hypothesis theory**

Studies regarding whether home and international students develop their IC through contact on home campus are not well addressed (Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Most of the studies concerning this issue investigated in the study abroad activities or programs

(e.g. Pedersen, 2010; Currier, Lucas, & Arnault, 2010) rather than on an internationally diverse home campus (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). As a large body of research suggest, friendships between home and international students are often seen as challenging and unsuccessful (Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis' theory aims to investigate how prejudice and discrimination can be reduced and how interactions among cross-cultural contacts can be fostered and improved. Allport proposes four conditions that may reduce prejudice, including equal status, common goals, no intergroup competition, and authorities' support. However, Davies et al. (2011) suggest that these four factors can facilitate the effect on reducing discrimination but are not necessary conditions. Harrison and Peacock (2009) propose that the 'common goals' can be found most likely through classroom settings, however, opportunities to promote mixed culture group work within class are often missed (De Vita, 2005; Ippolito, 2007). Without active management and encouraging environment that values international elements, mono-culture group tends to be formed among students (Hills & Thom, 2005). Even being involved in an 'international classroom' may not necessarily generate intercultural interaction, and if it does occur, it can be problematic or require careful management (Leask, 2007). Pettigrew et al. (2011) add that involuntary contact, such as group work without appropriate management, is regarded as negative intergroup contact. Negative contact involves situations where students feel threatened and did not choose to have the contact by themselves (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Previous studies have applied Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis' to explain how sojourners' prior overseas experiences facilitate their IC by reducing intergroup prejudice (e.g. Harrison, 2011). More specifically, Harrison (2011) indicates that intergroup interactions in early life may reduce intergroup anxiety and prejudice to a degree, particularly those who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as it may prepare individuals to be more open-minded and interculturally competent in future intercultural situations. Moreover, this hypothesis can also be applied, explaining how involuntary contact such as group work may cause problems in developing students' OM where appropriate guidance is lacking (e.g. Summers & Volet, 2008; Haneda, 2014; Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Pettigrew et al., 2011). In accordance with Allport's (1954) contact theory, Summers and Volet (2008) suggest that group work provides an opportunity for all students to have more intergroup interactions and to promote a positive attitude towards each other. On the other hand, Lantz-Deaton (2017) note that according to Pettigrew et al. (2011),

group work as an involuntary-based assessment can generate negative results for mutual understanding<sup>28</sup>. Both prior overseas experiences and group work are seen as important factors in students' IC, Allport's contact theory was therefore adopted as a main theoretical framework in this study.

### **3.4 Pre-course Factors Affecting Students' Intercultural Competence**

A number of contributory factors were identified in the literature in relation to students' development of IC, ranging from the host language proficiency (Young & Schartner, 2014), learning motivations (Lantz-Deaton, 2017) and previous intercultural experience (Hismanoglu, 2011), to the nature of learning environment, curriculum, and assessment tasks, such as group work (Sawir, 2013). Similarly, Shannon and Begley (2008) identify foreign language abilities and prior international work experience as the predictors for IC development. Differences in students' intercultural experiences and perceptions have also been studied based on other factors such as country of origin, subjects of study, and length of stay although little association has been found (Gu et al., 2010). In the earlier studies, these contributory factors have been discussed within different categories. Craig (1983) categorises them into students' personal characteristics and in-country factors. The former group includes variables such as language competence, prior overseas experience, openness of personality, level of maturity, gender, programme of study, participation in pre-program classes and reasons for studying abroad. For the latter group, Graig includes items such as accommodation environment, length of stay, host national contacts, amount of travel and courses (Craig, 1983; Weaver, 1989).

Furthermore, Berry (2006) distinguishes contributory factors between those that exist prior to the sojourn as pre-sojourn factors and those appear during sojourn as in-sojourn factors. In Gu and her colleagues' study, a four-dimension framework was proposed to illustrate the factors that influence students' intercultural experience and they are 'at home', 'at university', 'student life', and 'the student self' factors (Gu et al., 2010). In addition, a more fundamental theory is the primary intensity factors that influence sojourners' intercultural experiences, which was constructed by Paige in 1993, including the factors of host language ability, prior intercultural experiences, and expectations, etc. In this study, the influencing factors are discussed in the

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<sup>28</sup> Further discussion on group work will be discussed in section 3.5.1.



categories of pre-course factors including students' prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, and language proficiency in relation to students' development of IC. A number of recent studies have identified these factors as 'pre-sojourn' factors in relation to sojourners' IC development (e.g. Schartner, 2016; Schartner & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2013). Different from previous studies, students' learning motivations for studying at the host university are also explored as one of the pre-course factors, which may influence students' IC development (e.g. Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Therefore, in this section, the three factors (prior overseas experience, learning motivations, and English proficiency) were discussed as pre-course contributory factors to investigate both home and international students' IC development since home students' experiences have been largely overlooked compared to international students' (e.g. Lantz-Deaton, 2017). However, English language proficiency was mainly designed to measure international students who are L2 speakers of English. It also applies to home students whose first language is not English (e.g. immigrants). In general, the impact of prior overseas experience, learning motivation, and English language proficiency on IC development has been studied more with international students, whereas little has been found about home students (e.g. Hismanoglu, 2011; Takeuchi et al., 2002). This is a gap that the present study attempts to address.

#### ***3.4.1 Prior overseas experience***

Earlier studies address that student sojourners with prior overseas experience transit more easily to a new culture and adjust better than those without prior international experience (Kim, 1988; Furnham, 2004). More specifically, the former group of sojourners experiences fewer adjustment difficulties and less stress and cultural shock (Bochner et al., 1986) while those with no prior overseas experience tend to struggle more in managing their transition, and they also found it more difficult to make intercultural friendships (Rohrlich & Martin, 1991; Yavas & Bodur, 1999; Young & Schartner, 2014). Tarique and Takeuchi (2008) emphasise that the number and length of international experience prior to the study have positive effect on students' IC. It is assumed that prior overseas experience provide sojourners with direct opportunities to learn, gain experiences and skills in adapting to another culture, communicating with people from other cultures, and therefore it helps them to prepare themselves with relevant competence to cope well in a similar situation (Shaffer et al., 1999; Selmer, 2002). Although a few studies found that there is no

direct correlation between students' prior overseas experience and their global-mindedness (Kehl & Morris, 2008), statistically significant positive changes have been found on the level of expatriates' prior overseas experience, and the development of their IC in previous studies (e.g. Hismanoglu, 2011; Lee & Sukoco, 2010; Black, 1988; Parker & McEvoy, 1993; Yavas & Bodur, 1999). Early empirical findings (Church, 1982) showed that prior cultural experience or prior exposure to cultural differences facilitate expatriate adjustment. Black (1988) suggests the positive relationship between work adjustment and prior overseas experience. Hismanoglu (2011) discovers that there is a significant difference in student's IC development between students with prior overseas experience ( $M=0.87$ ,  $SD=0.15$ ) and those without prior overseas experience ( $M=0.60$ ,  $SD=0.18$ ).

A number of studies indicate that prior overseas experience is a critical contributory factor in relation to adjustment to the host culture and IC development, although there has been little research to further probe and distinguish different types of prior international experiences in association with IC development. For example, Takeuchi et al. (2002) categorise expatriates' prior overseas experience into work and non-work (travelling and studying), culture-specific and culture-general related domains in his study. They found that prior international experience only acted as a moderator rather than an antecedent to expatriates adjustment in a new working environment, however it can be a significant moderator in this process (Takeuchi et al., 2002), in line with Lee and Sukoco (2010) who found that prior overseas experience serves as a moderating variable. Regarding the literature review above, it is hard to prove the relationship between prior overseas experience and students' IC development since prior overseas experience can be different from person to person. It ranges from a few days' travelling, a few weeks' culture exchange study to the completion of a degree or working in another country for a few years. Therefore, in order to know if prior overseas experience is associated with IC development and adjustment, it is important to find out what types of prior overseas experience can significantly assist IC development and cross-cultural adjustment and what cannot. This has been discussed comparatively more with business sojourners in working environment but little is known with student sojourners. There is an increasing number of studies investigating the impact of sojourners' prior overseas experiences on their IC development, however, home students have thus far been largely neglected in the literature on IC development. One reason is probably because home students were seen as the ones who are studying in their home country. It is often

assumed that home and European students experience less culture shock and go through few adaptations compared to international students who study in a completely new cultural environment (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). However, since internationalisation has changed the landscape of higher education, it not only affects international students who travel abroad to study, it also brings changes to home students who are also involved in intercultural situations at their home campus. The present study acknowledges the importance of home student experiences and aims to study their intercultural competence as well.

### **3.4.2 Learning motivation**

Learning motivation is seen as an important factor in predicting international students' IC (Chirkov et al., 2007; Lantz-Deaton, 2017) and it also can lead to different intercultural learning experiences among students even in the same environment and/or context (Kitsantas, 2004). A person's motivation decides his or her desire to do things and in this study, it refers to one's desire to gain intercultural experience (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Byram (1997) compares people who are truly open and interested in experiencing different cultures and those who simply viewing cultural differences as cultural tourists. According to the self-determination motivation theory, the concept of motivation appears to have two different types, which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Specifically speaking, individuals who are learning with the aim of achieving career goals or employment enhancement, and are not motivated to learn any other cultures, are not likely to develop their IC; this is called extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). On the contrary, intrinsic motivation is where a person is strongly motivated to gain intercultural experience, where curiosity drives him or her to learn more about other people and other cultures (Sheldon et al., 2017); in such cases, he or she is more likely to be interculturally competent (Lantz-Deaton, 2017).

The motivations for international students to study abroad especially in Anglophone countries vary including pursuing a better quality of education (King et al., 2010; King & Sondhi, 2018), improving their English ability (Hernández, 2010; Pietro & Page, 2008), career prospects (Kelly, 2010; King & Sondhi, 2018) and gaining intercultural and international exposure (Kelly, 2010; Kettle, 2011). Other determining factors are the reputation of the host university, short length of the programme, financial and personal reasons, such as immigration (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Compared with international students, UK young students are less likely to

choose to study abroad throughout their tertiary education even though in general the number of outward mobility has increased more than ever before (Brooks & Waters, 2009). Many studies point out the benefits for UK student to study abroad (Brooks & Waters, 2009) but little attention has been given to studies on home students' learning motivations and objectives in choosing to study in their home country at a postgraduate-level or what factors stop them from pursuing overseas education (Findlay et al., 2010).

In addition, previous study also shows that a dominant group of people tend to be less motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically to carry out intercultural communication than minority groups simply because dominant groups may not always recognise the incentives for doing it (Jones, 2013). Therefore, this is often the case that home students are less willing to work or socialise with international counterparts (Harrison & Peacock, 2009), as the former may not value intercultural communication or international experience as important. However, on the other hand, international students tend to see intercultural or international experience as one of the most important aspects of studying abroad, therefore they have a stronger intrinsic motivation to make friends with home students or other international students (Mckenzie & Baldassar, 2017). Since individual's motivations to some extent determine his/her learning experience and IC, it is further investigated in this study by comparing them between home and international student cohorts.

### **3.4.3 Language proficiency**

The host language proficiency was seen as a significant indicator of sojourners' intercultural experience and intercultural adaptation by many intercultural scholars (Paige, 1993; Masgoret & Ward, 2006). Research studies of language proficiency on sojourners' intercultural adaptation reflected from academic, social and cultural aspects (e.g. Young et al., 2013; Wright & Schartner, 2013; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). An increasing body of research studies and models highlight the importance of linguistic competence in the development of IC (e.g. Covert, 2013; Yu & Shen, 2012; Young et al., 2013; Sarwari & Wahab, 2016). For example, Byram (1997) demonstrates the importance of language competence in developing IC in his definition. Lambert (1994) also claims that foreign language proficiency plays a significant role in intercultural communication. These two definitions are the highest rated definitions in Deardorff's work (2004). However, it is worth noting that although

researchers acknowledged the importance of the host language skills in IC development, it is not seen as the most fundamental element compared to such as one's attitudes or values (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004).

Studies show that a lack of the host language proficiency can easily lead to a feeling of frustration, depression, and isolation (Paige, 1993; Poyrazli et al., 2004) and also to some extent impede international students' ability in making friends with locals and other international peers (Yang et al., 2006). Consequently, students who struggled with English tend to experience more social and cultural stress than those who have good English. All of the above negative feelings and experiences that may be caused by language issues directly lead to an unsuccessful intercultural adaptation. On the contrary, students with decent English skills are likely to adapt and function well in the host culture as their English proficiency can assist them to establish social support and interpersonal relationships which helped their socio-cultural adaptation (Yu & Shen, 2010). With regard to international students' academic experiences, researchers claim that poor English skills can directly lead to unsatisfied learning performances, including difficulties in understanding lectures, writing essays, passing examinations and contributing to group projects (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Ozer, 2015). Taking the failure to contribute to group work for instance, studies found that international students' low level of English proficiency generate academic problems such as communication breakdown, and pressure on home students to check on group report, which can result in home students' unwillingness to work with them (Osmond & Roed, 2010; Barron, 2006; Schartner, 2016).

This section illustrates the importance of the host language proficiency on students' intercultural adaptation and their IC development. A large number of studies acknowledge the positive correlation between students' academic, socio-cultural experience and those who have decent English skills (Schartner & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2013). Both home and international student cohorts address that English proficiency plays an important role in forming intercultural friendships but researchers claim that it is not the fundamental factor in developing IC (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004). In the following section, student intercultural experiences are explored from academic, social and cultural aspects in order to justify the development of IC as a learning outcome of internationalisation.

### **3.5 Students' Academic and Socio-cultural Experiences on Intercultural Competence**

Followed by the pre-course factors discussed above (3.4), this section investigates in-course factors in association with students' IC. The in-course factors discussed in this section that impact students' intercultural competence are learning environment and assignment tasks(3.5.1), intercultural friendship (3.5.2), and adaptation difficulties (3.5.3). These are the most commonly identified factors in the literature review, which have been classified as in-course contributory factors towards students' IC in this study.

#### ***3.5.1 Learning environment and assignment tasks***

Studies show that international students are, by and large, satisfied with their academic experiences although some certain degree of anxiety has been reported, especially at an early stage. They also see intercultural experiences as an important learning process for studying abroad. However, there is a lack of studies investigating home students' academic experiences who study in an internationalised university. This section aims to seek different perceptions among international and home students regarding their academic experiences and to consider what factors contribute to different experiences.

Intercultural scholars found that curriculum that involves international or intercultural elements and assessment that includes working among students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are two crucial contributory factors for both home and international students' IC development (Gurin et al., 2002; Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado, 2007; Summers & Volet, 2008). Many researchers have addressed the need to enhance the current curriculum<sup>29</sup> to consider intercultural competence of students as a goal for higher education institutions (Deardorff, 2006; Kehl & Morris, 2008). Brown, Mak, and Neil (2016) conducted a study to investigate the impact of curriculum changes with intercultural elements on students' intercultural competence development in a third-year social psychology course at an Australian university. By adopting a quantitative approach, the results showed that home students' intercultural awareness and knowledge were enhanced, but less so in developing intercultural competence. One reason could be IC development is an ongoing

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<sup>29</sup> Internationalisation of the curriculum was discussed in 2.4 with disciplinary differences.

process, which requires a long-term effort. It could also be argued that qualitative methods should be used with quantitative measures to further assess IC (Deardorff, 2011).

Another way to involve both home and international students through the curriculum is mixed culture group work, which enhances student learning and intercultural experiences (Denson & Zhang, 2010; Lavy, 2016). Group work has been defined as 'a collection of two or more individuals assembled for a common purpose, share a temporal exercise (past, present, or future), and interact with one another, yet remain independent in some form or another' (Susskind & Borchgrevink, 1999, p.22). Researchers have shown that since academic work groups require students' a more complex skill set, it becomes increasingly beneficial and popular (Sterns & Spokus, 2013; Boud, 2014). IoHE has shed light on the impact of group work on student academic and personal development.

Evidence shows that international and home students have different perceptions toward their experiences in studying in an 'internationalised' university. International students who study in the programmes that offer group discussion/work tend to have more positive feedback for experiencing the university's culture of diversity (Glass, 2012) while home students are often found to resist intercultural group work and tend to avoid interactions with international peers (Harrison, 2015). Supporters for culturally mixed group work report that the advantage of forming mixed discussion groups is to encourage students to learn from multicultural perspectives in the class, which can apply the knowledge to a global context (Sawir, 2013). Researchers also highlighted that group work can benefit international students' academic and sociocultural adjustment (Wang, 2012), contributing to a more diversified social networking over a period of time. However, some proposed that by simply placing students into groups with others from different cultures/countries may not lead to productive collaboration (Moore & Hampton, 2015) due to social tensions among different group members (Takahashi & Saito, 2013), which may due to lack of shared experiences and backgrounds (Fozdar & Volet, 2012). In Cathcart, Dixon-Dawson, and Hall's (2005) study, both home and international students felt frustrated in intercultural group work due to language and cultural barriers. Others argue that if the assignment is of high stakes, culturally mixed group work can be negatively perceived by both home and international student and it can cause negative outcomes such as intergroup anxiety and prejudice (Carroll & Li, 2008; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002; Summers & Volet, 2008; Lantz-

Deaton, 2017; Haneda, 2014). Home students have been found to worry that working with international students could potentially affect their marks negatively (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). This could be explained by 'negative intergroup contact' hypothesis proposed by Pettigrew et al. (2011) based on Allport's 'contact theory'<sup>30</sup> (1954), suggesting that involuntary contact can result in negative interaction and cause problems in developing students' open-mindedness in intercultural settings.

Although students acknowledge the benefits of having an international and intercultural curriculum and mixed discussion groups on their IC, they found that mixed culture group work can be challenging (Fozdar & Volet, 2012). In fact, both home and international students prefer to work on assignments with people from their own countries (Volet & Ang, 2012; Moore & Hampton, 2015). The reasons can be generally categorised into four, which include language and communication, emotional connectedness, practicalities (work and family commitment of home students), and negative cultural stereotype (Popov et al., 2012; Volet & Ang, 2012; Turner, 2009). It is widely believed that individuals who share the same cultural background and language tend to have a similar communication style and a sense of humour and therefore working with people who from the same country often make them feel comfortable and give them a sense of familiarity (Volet & Tan-Quigley, 1995). International students report that local students tend to be occupied with many other things rather than study, for example, family commitments, part-time jobs and hence it can be difficult to arrange time after class to work on projects together. On the other hand, research (Volet & Ang, 2012) shows that home students tend to have ethnocentric views and this prevents them from forming groups with international students. The following reasons were reported by home students in a study by Harrison and Peacock (2009): negative stereotyping, intergroup anxiety, symbolic threats (see international students as the 'other'), and realistic threats (competition for resources). A study conducted in New Zealand found that when international student numbers reach around 15%, home students' perceptions toward them changed from positive to negative, causing anxiety and irritation in the classroom (Ward et al., 2005).

However, in Volet and Ang's (2012) study, students gradually changed their attitudes after a certain period of time and believed that the individual differences, in

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<sup>30</sup> Details on Contact Theory can be found in 3.3.3.



fact, surpass the cultural differences when it comes to culturally mixed group teamwork, which means students experience more on management and team work related issues rather than issues caused by cultural differences. This research study attempts to investigate both home and international students' experiences of intercultural group work in order to better understand how intercultural group work promote or impede their IC development over time.

### ***3.5.2 Social integration and intercultural friendships***

Regarding the social aspect, attending informal curriculum activities can promote students' personal growth, physical and mental health, academic achievement, social and cultural awareness (de Wit, 2009). It is regarded as a significant indicator for social interactions among different student cohorts by establishing social networks in low-risk and relaxing situations, which sometimes can be more effective than in an academic context (Gomez, 2002). In addition, Leask (2009) suggests that informal curriculum should be valued as highly as formal curriculum in promoting both home and international students' interactions with each other. However, friendships between home and international students are seen as challenging and rare (William & Johnson, 2011), as Teekens (2006) claims that 'in spite of many efforts on campus, by staff and students it remains very difficult to bring international and home students together' (p.9). Study (Rienties et al., 2012) shows that dominant/home students are less interested and motivated in initiating conversations with their international peers therefore international students as the minority group needs to make extra effort to achieve social integration in the host university if they want to gain any intercultural experience. It seems that for home students, their dominant motivation to have intercultural contacts was based on the fact that it offers them functional use only, such as foreign language learning or travelling (Dunne, 2008, p.231). A common belief is that international students experience a lack of host contacts during their stay in the UK HE context, and that this affects their adaptation in the new culture (Young et al., 2013). A research study in Australia found that home students kept interactions with international students to a minimum (Volet & Ang, 1998). Similarly, in Australia and New Zealand, it has been reported that although home students have recognised the value of having intercultural interactions, they are not prepared to engage with international students either in or out of the class (Leask, 2005; Ward et al., 2005). A report also found that UK students did not see the presence of international students as negative, however, they were rather

indifferent to interacting with them and did not identify any benefits associated with intercultural contact. Some pointed out that home students felt threatened and anxious when they encountered large number of international students (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). In general, social interaction among home and international students has been regarded as one of the most difficult challenges in IaH (Teekens, 2006). Studies have identified challenges that home and international students encounter in intercultural situations and the most common ones include language barriers, fears of appearing racist, academic worries and differences in values and priorities (Dunne, 2009; Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Other factors that may affect the contact between home and international students are identified as past intercultural experiences of home and international students, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the nature and structure of the learning environment and assignment tasks (Leask, 2009). Researchers (e.g. Paige, 1993; Leask, 2009; Leask, 2004; Zimitat, 2008) found that intercultural interaction in a learning environment or preparing for assignment tasks where the stakes are high can cause many challenges and intercultural interactions are often regarded as intense and risky by many students<sup>31</sup>. Most of the IC and IaH studies so far explore international students' intercultural friendship with home students or other international students but home students' perspectives on interactions with international students are rarely investigated in the literature (William & Johnson, 2010; Harrison & Peacock, 2009).

Hammer (2012) proposes the concept of 'immersion assumption' which means students tend to mix and integrate automatically on an internationally diverse campus, however, it is questioned by Brewer (2003) from a social psychology perspective, who suggests that it is difficult for individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to meet and communicate since they experience different behaviours, norms, and values from their own. Uncomfortable interactions can easily lead to feelings of anxiety and therefore further communications are avoided. In addition, it is worth noting that home and international students tend to have distinct social life patterns that can prevent them from interacting with each other and cause a lack of contacts (Gareis, 2012). Gareis's (ibid) research shows that students with different backgrounds, beliefs, interests and life styles appear to have different preferences in participating social activities. Home and international students are

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<sup>31</sup> Detailed studies were discussed in 3.5.1.

believed to share more differences than similarities. One striking factor that home students see as the greatest barrier to have intercultural friendships is the language barrier since talking with people who spoke poor English requires more effort (Harrison & Peacock, 2007). Home students claim that they do not want to have 'effortful' conversation as things such as being misunderstood, embarrassment or awkwardness can easily occur, especially in the social contexts where relaxation is needed (Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999). Another difference between international and home students is the time they are willing to spend on socialising and relaxing with friends (Zhao et al., 2005). International students are believed to suffer a great amount of pressure academically from both themselves and their family back home and therefore they may feel that they should make the most use of their time to study rather than attending social activities (Abel, 2002). Past studies indicate that a lack of leisure and relaxation during study lead to international students' sense of loneliness, depression (Beyers & Goossens, 2002; Sawir et al., 2008) and stress (Crockett et al. 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2011). In that sense, international students are often seen as those who experience more challenges during their sojourn than home students. Therefore, informal curriculum activities provide them with the chance to be involved in the community and enhance their sense of belonging (Glass & Westmont, 2014). In general, attending social events or activities is an effective and efficient way to gain intercultural experience by knowing more people and their cultures and it is not limited to the host country.

This section discusses both home and international students' perceptions of their sociocultural experiences when studying in an 'internationalised university', including their different attitudes towards social interactions, intercultural friendships and social activities in promoting IC. Compared with international students, home students' experiences and perceptions seem to have been less discussed in previous studies. In this study, the researcher attempts to compare postgraduate taught home and international students' sociocultural experience and discuss it with regard to their IC development.

### ***3.5.3 Adaptation difficulties and challenges***

Research has shown that both international and home students experience adjustment difficulties, such as homesickness and academic pressure when they transit to a new learning environment (Cameron & Kirkman, 2010; Evans & Stevenson, 2011; Appleby, 2005; Thurber & Walton, 2012). However, it seems that

international students tend to experience more adjustment problems than domestic students because the challenges of transition can be magnified for those who come from different cultural backgrounds (Lee et al., 2004). In addition to the above general stressors that both cohorts could experience, international students also suffer acculturative stress that can be associated with differences in language, in teaching methods and in their ability to fit in locally (Bodycott, Mak, & Ramburuth, 2014).

According to the Intensity Factors proposed by Paige (1993), cultural distance affects students' intercultural adaptation. It is often associated with students' country of origin, which means the greater differences are between the host and one's home culture, the more likely it is for the student to experience more homesickness and have stressful intercultural experiences (Eurelings-Bontekoe et al., 2000; Paige, 1993). To back up that idea, Yeh and Inose (2003) found that European students tend to report less stress and culture shock than students from Asian or African countries. One of the reasons can be that international students from Asia, Africa, India, Latin America or the Middle East are more likely to experience significant discrimination than home and European students (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007). The former group of students (non-European) report that they experience a feeling of inferiority, verbal insults or even physical attack. Such unpleasant experiences can contribute to unsuccessful adaptation, reduced psychological wellbeing, depression and homesickness (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Wei et al., 2007).

Homesickness is frequently discussed as a main component of culture shock among both home and international students, which is a person's desire for familiar environments and sometimes can lead to anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Thurber & Walton, 2012; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015). Studies show that homesickness can bring negative effects including loneliness, sadness and adjustment difficulties, which can impact individuals' physical and psychological wellbeing (Tognoli, 2003; Russell et al., 2010). It can also result in underperformance in academic studies (Messina, 2007) and social alienation (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). In addition, Messina (2007) states that many first-year university students experience this feeling. However, it was reported that international students seem to experience homesickness and stress more profoundly than local or EU students (Zheng & Berry, 1991).

Internationalisation has changed the landscape of higher education. It not only affects international students who travel abroad to study, it also brings changes to students who study at their home campuses. However, international students' intercultural experiences have been widely discussed in the literature and they are commonly perceived as the ones who experience more adaptations and challenges than their domestic counterparts, while the latter has rarely been the focus. The present study attempts to explore the differences and similarities between home and international students' intercultural experiences and how these experiences impact their development of intercultural competence.

### **3.6 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter reviews the literature on students' intercultural experience from the perspective of gaining intercultural experience and developing IC as a learning outcome of HE internationalisation. To begin with, definitions, components and assessment tools for IC were introduced. The pre-course factors that have been identified in the literature, which specifically influence students' intercultural competence/experience, including prior overseas experience, learning motives and the host language (English) proficiency are explored. Drawing from the U-curved model (Lysgaard, 1955), students' intercultural experiences have been in general studied from the academic, social and cultural aspects. During their study, different students tend to show differences in their experiences and perceptions in terms of their intercultural experiences and in this study, students are generally grouped into international, EU and home students. In the academic aspect, both home and international students' experiences are explored through the internationalisation of the curriculum including the learning environment and assignment tasks. Regarding the social aspect, home and international students' social experiences - including attending social events or activities - and having intercultural friendships are investigated in relation to their IC development. In terms of the cultural aspect, this study mainly reviews on how cultural differences lead to discriminations, cultural shock and homesickness, and how these issues impact home and international students' intercultural adaptation.

In light of increasing attention on a more value-based development of students in recent years, a number of studies that related to internationalisation at home, IoC, 'global graduates' and students' intercultural experiences/competence

have been reviewed in Chapter 2 and 3 in relation to the following research questions:

RQ1: How are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood by staff and students across different disciplines within the host university, and are there differences between these understandings?

RQ2: How do pre-course factors (prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language ability, and gender) affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

RQ3: What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development?

The following table is a summary to illustrate the key literature that informed each of the research questions and the chosen methods of collecting data to address each research question.

Research questions	Authors	Research aim	Methods
RQ1	Schartner and Cho (2016)	To investigate postgraduate students and staff perceptions of internationalisation (UK)	Survey and focus groups
	Ryall (2014)	To investigate staff's conceptions and experiences of internationalisation (UK)	Questionnaire and interviews
	Pattison and Robson (2013)	International postgraduate students' experiences of an internationalised university (UK)	Secondary interview data
	Harrison and Peacock (2009)	Undergraduate home students' perspectives on 'internationalisation at home' – disciplinary differences (UK)	Focus groups and interviews
	Wihlborg (2004)	Undergraduate students' understandings of internationalisation (Sweden)	Interviews
RQ2	Lantz-Deaton (2017)	The impact of learning motives, prior overseas experiences and stress on intercultural competence (UK)	Pre- and post-IDI questionnaire

	Hismanoglu (2011)	To explore how linguistic proficiency and prior overseas experiences are related to IC development	Questionnaire
	Yu and Shen (2012)	The relationship between second language proficiency, integrative motivations and cross-cultural adaptation (Malaysia)	Questionnaire
	Lee and Sukoco (2010)	The impact of work and non-work prior international experiences on cultural intelligence	Questionnaire
RQ3	Denson and Zhang (2010)	The impact of students' experiences with diversity on student learning and graduate attributes development (Australia)	Survey with open-ended and closed-ended questions
	Brown, Mak, and Neil (2016)	The effect of an internationalised curriculum on intercultural competence (Australia)	Questionnaire
	Gu, Schweisfurth, and Day (2010)	Academic and sociocultural factors that impact international students' intercultural experiences (UK)	Survey and longitudinal interviews
	Leask (2009)	Using formal and informal curricula to develop students' intercultural competence (Australia)	Survey and focus groups

Table 4 A summary of key literature that informed each of the research questions

## Chapter 4 Research Design and Methodology

### 4.1 The Research Design

Chapters 2 and 3 provided a review of the literature on the IoHE focused on three interrelated themes: internationalisation strategy, IoC, and internationalising the student experience. These three elements underpin the discussion on student IC development – an important learning outcome of internationalisation in the HE context. Based on the extensive theoretical and empirical studies discussed above, this chapter presents the research approach that was adopted in this study. This chapter begins with an introduction to the underpinning philosophical paradigm of this study – pragmatism (see 4.1.1), leading to a mixed-methods research approach (see 4.1.2) and to the longitudinal design (see 4.1.3). The research aim and research questions are revisited in section 4.2, followed by the rationale for participant sampling (see 4.3), quantitative and qualitative research instruments (see 4.4 and 4.5), and data analysis (see 4.6). Lastly, this chapter discusses the potential ethical concerns (see 4.7) and limitations of the research design (see 4.8).

#### 4.1.1 *The pragmatic paradigm*

The term 'paradigm' is adopted to indicate 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Other researchers also use other terms such as 'worldview' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) or 'ontology and epistemology' (Crotty, 1998) to illustrate the same concept – the nature of the research/social phenomenon and the researcher's view of reality. Tracing back to the history of pragmatism, this paradigm was originally developed from the work of Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992). It does not belong to any single one system of inquiry, but focuses on using all possible approaches to understand the social phenomenon or solve the problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985).

Pragmatism is the philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies and many researchers have emphasised the importance of using pluralistic approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of problems in social science (Morgan, 2007; Patton, 1990). Before the 1980s, when the concept of mixed methods had not yet been formalised, single method research was widely adopted by researchers. The positivist paradigm introduced by Auguste Comte (Creswell, 2003), allowed the world to be seen as objective, measurable, and predictable. Positivism claims that 'science provides us with the clearest possible idea of knowledge' and hence



research studies were generally conducted quantitatively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p.11). However, positivism does not apply when studying human nature or the complexities of human behaviour. An interpretive paradigm was therefore introduced to understand the subjective world of individual experiences and qualitative approaches gained popularity in social science (Webb, 1990).

In order to overcome any weaknesses of each research approach, mixed methods approaches have increasingly been employed in numerous studies. Based on the pragmatism stance of this study, a mixed-method approach with both qualitative and quantitative elements, was adopted to address the research questions. More specifically, pragmatism is suitable for this study mainly because this present research aims to measure students' IC with the MPQ<sup>32</sup> as the learning outcome meanwhile students' experiences were monitored in the process.

#### ***4.1.2 A mixed methods approach***

Mixed methods research can incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is believed that the overall strength of a study using a mixed research approach is greater than using either qualitative or quantitative alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Gorard and Taylor (2004) describe mixed-methods as 'a third methodological movement'. As a new research paradigm, researchers have increasingly claimed the efficiency of a combined method (Newby, 2010). As Pashaeizad (2010, p.14) states the complexity of the research is sometimes beyond numbers or words, therefore, the use of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods can provide a more complete and sound analysis of the study. The concept of mixing different methods in research can be traced back to 1959. Campbell and Fish first used multi-method in their study and advocated the benefits of using interviews in combination with surveys (Sieber, 1973). In the literature, several terms have been adopted when discussing research that combines methods, such as multi-method, convergent, integrated, and combined methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In this study, the term mixed-method approach is adopted.

As one of the primary models in the mixed methods field of social science studies, explanatory sequential mixed methods were developed to conduct this study. The concept of this method is to conduct quantitative research at the beginning of the study and then build on the analysis of results to seek further

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<sup>32</sup> The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) was introduced in section 3.2.2.

explanation and expansion through further qualitative research – for example to investigate individuals' experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2015). The quantitative element generally follows a deductive research process. Deductive reasoning is based on Aristotle's contribution to formal logic, which means the conclusion can be deduced from a theory (Walton, 2013). Francis Bacon emphasised the importance of the observational basis of science (qualitative approach) and hence proposed inductive approaches (Ormston et al., 2014). Qualitative approaches generally follow an inductive process.

In this study, a combined inductive and deductive approach (see Figure 5) was selected as a suitable way to investigate students' IC development. The deductive element involved measuring students' IC at the beginning and the end of the academic year using the MPQ survey. Some pre-course factors were also measured in relation to students' IC development. The interviews that were conducted, explored students' academic and socio-cultural experiences in association with their IC development. The inductive element of the study was selected to enable factors to emerge from students' experiences that may affect their IC (qualitative data), which have not been identified in previous studies.

Although this study adopted a mixed-methods approach, it was determined that it was better to rely more on qualitative data than quantitative data. This decision was made first of all on the basis that interviews would provide a more in-depth data set in this context given the exploratory nature of the study. Secondly, students' experiences and perceptions that were captured over time would provide a richer picture to illuminate their IC development over the period of nine months than data from the pre- and post- surveys could provide.

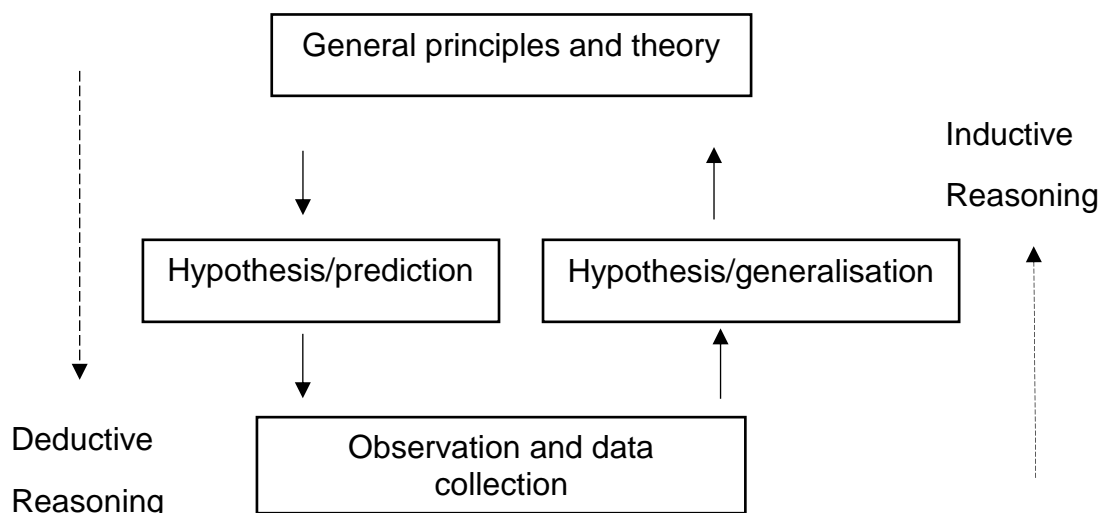


Figure 5 The Deductive and Inductive Research Process<sup>33</sup>

Previous IC studies have largely relied on either qualitative methods such as interviews and reflective writing (Spooner-Lane et al., 2013) or quantitative self-report survey, Likert-type or multiple-choice measures (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012; Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Yakunina et al., 2012). Intercultural scholars in Deardorff's (2006) Delphi study suggested that case study and interviews were the best ways to assess IC, while surveys and portfolio assessments were seen as the most predominant assessment formats to measure IC by most research studies (Griffith et al., 2016; Ingulsrud et al., 2000). Although portfolio assessments can collect rich and detailed evidence of intercultural learning over time, they can be time-consuming and difficult to carry out (Jacobson, Sleicher, & Burke, 1999).

In this study, a mixed-methods approach was considered to be more suitable for answering the proposed research questions. On one hand, it provides pre and post measures of students' IC development. On the other hand, it monitors their IC development with more in-depth interview data. As Deardorff (2016) mentioned when measuring students' IC development over a period of time, an inventory alone is not sufficient due to the multidimensional nature of IC (Deardorff, 2016). A mixed-methods assessment of multiple dimensions can offer more comprehensive measures, including qualitative interviews, observations, case study or student portfolios, etc. Quantitative approaches such as self-report pre/post-test can be included (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009). In previous studies, researchers have suggested the effectiveness of using both qualitative and quantitative methods in

<sup>33</sup> Source: Adapted from Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007.

measuring IC (Deardorff, 2012; Perry & Southwell, 2011). Different IC tests were used in a number of studies predominantly with a cross-sectional research design (see Table 2). Although this has become increasingly popular in recent years, it has, however, been shown that researchers, to a large extent, have overlooked the importance of pre- and post- quantitative method's contribution in the monitoring of changes in students' IC over time and to investigations into the contributory factors that affected their IC development. Table 5 illustrates IC studies that adopted different variations or approaches to mixed methods research.

Authors	Sample	Research method	Research design
Schartner (2016)	International postgraduate students at a British university (N=223)	A mixed methods approach: the MPQ and interviews	Longitudinal
Riley, Bustamante, & Edmonson (2016)	Community college students from the United States (N=400)	A mixed methods approach: IDI and focus groups	Cross-sectional
Tompkins, Cook, Miller, and LePeau (2017)	Undergraduate students at an American public institution (N=2,490)	A mixed methods survey approach: ISS and open-ended questions	Cross-sectional
Paras, Carignan, Brenner, Hardy, Malmgren, & Rathburn (2019)	Short-term study abroad students in Canada and the United States (N=53)	A mixed methods approach: IDI and reflection writing	Longitudinal
Spooner-Lane et al. (2013)	Malaysian and Australian preservice teachers (N=72) and students (N=59)	Qualitative approach: reflective writing and focus group interviews	Longitudinal

Lantz-Deaton (2017)	Students from Psychology course at a British university (N=122)	Quantitative approach: IDI	Longitudinal
Behrnd & Porzelt (2012)	German university students (N=72)	Quantitative approach: ASIC	Longitudinal

Table 5 Research methods and design in previous IC studies

The approach to collecting data for this study involved a pre- and post- self-report survey and three rounds of semi-structured interviews. The mixture of methods was selected to complement each other. Some previous studies also adopted a mixed-methods approach to measure students' IC over time and monitor the changes that occurred (e.g. Scharner, 2016). In this study, the quantitative findings enabled the researcher to identify the patterns emerging in the data set in terms of how each subscale of IC measurement has been developed and how students' pre-course and in-course factors contribute to their IC development. The qualitative data provided the descriptive and subjective understandings of HE internationalisation and intercultural competence, as well as the pre i.e. prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language proficiency, and gender and post factors i.e. academic and socio-cultural experiences that impact their intercultural competence.

#### **4.1.3 Longitudinal study**

Longitudinal research may study a single cohort of participants and collect data over a period ranging from several weeks or months to many years (Goodwin, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Longitudinal studies may focus on the development of a particular aspect of human growth or development (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) to yield rich and accurate data that can be traced over time (Gorard, 2001). Ruspini (2002) points out that longitudinal studies enable researchers to analyse 'the duration of social phenomena' (p.24) and to emphasise the changes over time in association with certain variables or participants in order to identify long-term effects and explain changes with stable or variable factors. Longitudinal studies may incorporate repeated cross-sectional studies at different points in time. Each time the researcher can 'use the same sample, or a largely different sample, or a completely new sample' (p.3).

The present study aimed to explore students' development of IC and to evaluate the pre- and in-course factors that contribute to its development. In order to assess the development and change, data was collected longitudinally over nine months before, during and after participants started and finished their postgraduate taught programmes (i.e. first two semesters). Most IC models (e.g. Deardorff, 2004; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) emphasise on the developmental process of IC, claiming that IC can be developed over a period of time. However, most of the empirical studies to date exploring sojourner development of IC followed a cross-sectional design, while only a few cases adopted a longitudinal approach (e.g. Young & Schartner, 2013; Lantz-Deaton, 2017). The longitudinal research design in this study aimed to address the gap. The following diagram (see Figure 6) displays the process of longitudinal data collection adopted in this study, which explains the longitudinal nature of 'tracking' development over time by both measuring IC (pre/post) and monitoring development qualitatively. However, it is acknowledged that using longitudinal research design can also generate problems of attrition, as researchers face the risk of losing participants over time (Ruspini, 2002). Incentivising strategies are commonly adopted in population-based cohort studies, which have proved to be effective in mitigating attrition (Olsen, 2008; Booker et al., 2011). Both monetary and non-monetary incentives were used in this study as retention strategies to minimise attrition (Maxwell, Maynard, & Harding, 2012). At the end of the three rounds of interviews, £10 was given to each participant to incentivise their ongoing engagement with the study. In addition, audio recordings, transcripts, and the study results were sent to participants at the end of the study.

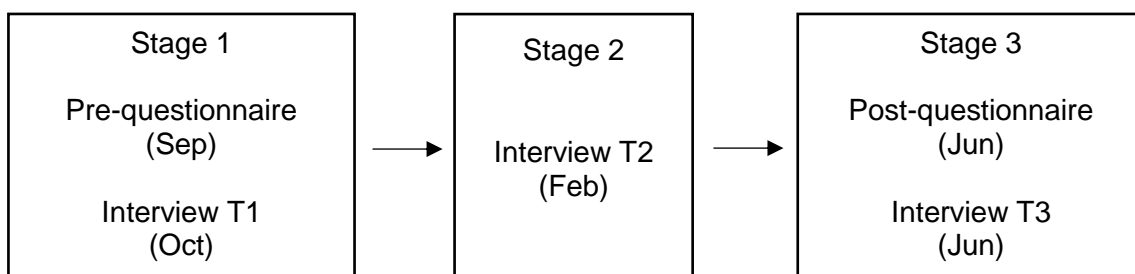


Figure 6 Data Collection Process

## 4.2 Research Questions

The aim of the study was to evaluate the development of IC among home and international one-year master's students and to explore what were the factors that

contribute to the development. The study involved participants from hard applied (Engineering), soft applied (Business) and soft pure (Education) disciplines in the chosen host university and investigated factors that facilitated or hampered the development of IC. IC as an important learning outcome of IaH is gaining increasing attention in the study of internationalisation. More specifically, this study aims to understand firstly, internationalisation in the host university from three dimensions: internationalisation strategy (institution), IoC (curriculum), and internationalised experiences (people). Secondly, the study investigated factors arising from these three dimensions that developed or hindered student's IC, along with their pre-course factors. The research questions for this study were based on the HE internationalisation framework developed by the Higher Education Academy in the UK (HEA, 2014, see Figure 7). The main focus of the research is:

- To what extent do students develop their IC after one-year Master's study in the host university?

Based on the HE internationalisation framework (HEA, 2014) and the pre-course and in-course contributory factors towards students' acculturation (Berry, 2006), the focus of the research study was developed into three specific research questions:

RQ1: How are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood by staff and students across different disciplines within the host university, and are there any differences between these understandings?

RQ2: How do pre-course factors (prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language ability, and gender) affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

RQ3: What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

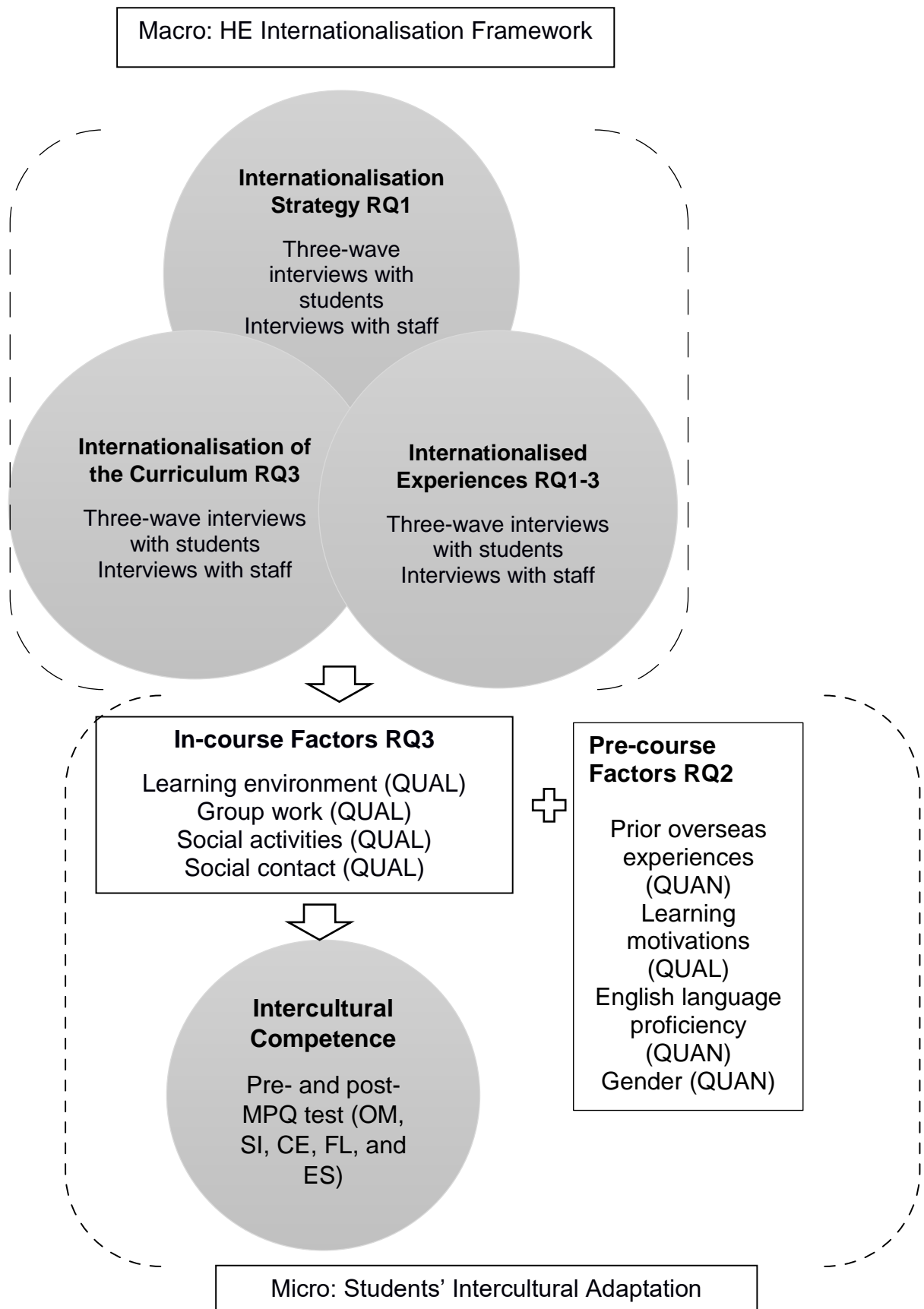


Figure 7 The Conceptual Framework for the Development of Research Questions and Research Methods



## 4.3 Sampling

### 4.3.1 *The research site*

The research context for this study was a higher education institution located in the North of England, with more than 20,000 students on its main campus. In 2016/17 there were over 2,000 full-time postgraduate (PG) students from overseas and 2,147 from EU and UK<sup>34</sup>. The participants for this study were one-year master students who undertook programmes in Education, Business or Engineering in the host university. The total number of students enrolled one-year master's studies in the academic year 2016/17 in Education was 166 including 26 home students and 140 international students. In the Engineering programmes, a total of 328 students were enrolled with 57 home students and 271 international students. In the Business programmes, 680 master's students were enrolled in 2016/17 with 118 home students and 562 international students<sup>35</sup>. Since the number of international students were greater than home students in all the three disciplines, more international students were recruited to participate in this study, both in the interviews and survey phases. As a result, although the study set out to compare intercultural experiences among international and home students, international students were the larger group in data collection and data analysis, as a reflection of postgraduate taught student demographics in the host university and in the relevant programmes<sup>36</sup>. Such a profile is not uncommon for UK and Australian PGT degrees. A similar study (Krajewski, 2011) investigating postgraduate students' intercultural competence development was conducted at an Australian university with a majority of international student participants and very few home students.

Regarding the diversity of the staff population in the host university, 338 out of 2,115 staff were from a black or minority ethnic background and a total of 1,562 staff were British nationals. It can be seen that the university was highly internationalised in terms of its large number of international students and the diversity of staff ethnicities, and it was therefore an appropriate site to investigate internationalisation as a strategy, IoC and the student experience and students' IC development.

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<sup>34</sup> At the H University website, the number of UK and EU students were calculated altogether.

<sup>35</sup> The data was from 2016/2017 academic year.

<sup>36</sup> This has been pointed out as a limitation in 4.8.

Access to participants is an important consideration for the researcher before undertaking any research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The researcher ensured that the access to participants was permitted. At the beginning of the data collection stage, the researcher contacted the degree programme directors in Engineering, Business and Education schools at the host university asking for their permission to invite their PGT students to participate in this longitudinal research project. Once it was permitted, an information sheet and consent form were sent to the students prior to the survey seeking for their participation and a nine-month commitment<sup>37</sup>.

#### 4.3.2 Participants

The participants for this study were one-year master's students and academic staff from three different disciplines (Business, Education, and Engineering), which are classified as soft applied, soft pure and hard applied in Becher's Typology (see Figure 8) (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Previous studies in IC studies focused on only one cohort such as students who come from the same country (Williams & Johnson, 2010), students who study in the same or similar programme (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002; Young et al., 2013), or international students as a homogeneous group who study in the same university (Woods et al., 2013; Yakunina et al., 2012). However, little has been known regarding disciplinary comparison studies. The chosen three disciplines have a large number of both home and international students and each one of them has a different academic classification according to Becher's typology (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Hence, it is worth investigating whether there are differences in learning environment, curriculum, and assessment across the disciplines that influence students' IC development.

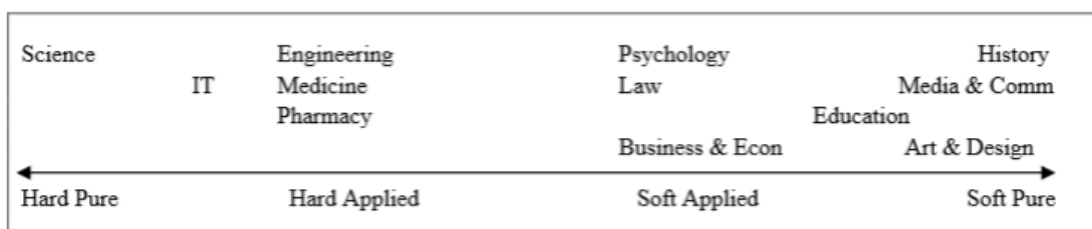


Figure 8 The Becher Typology

<sup>37</sup> Further details on the research procedure can be found in 4.7.

A total of 370 students took part in the pre-survey at Time 1. However, this number dropped for various reasons<sup>38</sup> and only 227 students participated in the post-survey at Time 2 (see Table 6). As shown in the table below, the participants from three disciplines experienced a certain degree of attrition but the attrition in Engineering discipline was the principal factor affecting the significant decrease in participants in the post-test data collection. However, subject attrition is relatively common in longitudinal research studies (Hansen et al., 1985), which has been already addressed in 4.1.3.

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Home students</b>	<b>International students</b>	<b>Total students</b>	<b>Missing data</b>
<b>Engineering</b>	30	84	123	9
<b>Education</b>	14	92	113	7
<b>Business</b>	12	111	134	11
<b>Total</b>	56	287	370	27

<b>Post-test</b>	<b>Home students</b>	<b>International students</b>	<b>Total students</b>	<b>Missing data</b>
<b>Engineering</b>	8	34	42	0
<b>Education</b>	9	74	84	1
<b>Business</b>	10	90	101	1
<b>Total</b>	27	198	227	2

Table 6 Number of Participants in the Pre- and Post- test

In order to understand what pre-course factors and in-course factors (students' academic and socio-cultural experiences) affected students' IC development, semi-structured interviews were conducted with student participants (N=14) from the three different disciplines. 14 participants were interviewed with 5 in Engineering, 5 in Education and 4 in the Business School (see Table 7). The participants were diversified in age, gender, and nationality. It should be mentioned that all the international interview participants spoke English as a foreign/second language while all home interview participants were English native speakers. Further detailed information on the recruitment of survey and interview participants was provided in section 4.3.2.

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<sup>38</sup> The reasons were explained in 4.4.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country	School
D	28	M	UK	Engineering
E	26	F	Iran	Engineering
I	27	M	Uruguay	Engineering
Y	24	F	Russia	Engineering
S	22	M	UK	Engineering
O	28	F	China	Education
B	45	M	UK	Education <sup>39</sup>
F	23	F	Indonesia	Education
P	22	F	Vietnam	Education
L	27	M	China	Education
R	22	F	Poland	Business
Q	26	F	China	Business
M	41	M	UK	Business <sup>40</sup>
A	23	M	India	Business

Table 7 Student Interviewees' Demographics Information

#### 4.4 Quantitative Research Methods

The quantitative research element was mainly used to measure one-year postgraduate students' IC. The most recent English version of the MPQ - Short Form (van der Zee et al., 2013) was adopted in this study to measure students' IC development in five dimensions: OM, CE, SI, ES, and FL. Participants' answers to MPQ items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally not applicable) to 5 (completely applicable). The pre-survey was conducted in the first week of the academic year (September, induction week) and the post-survey was conducted in the last week before students' taught programme study ends (June), nine-month into the programme. The purpose of conducting the MPQ twice was to try to understand how participants' IC had changed, meanwhile observing the differences or similarities in the development of IC among participants of different disciplines and among home and international students.

The MPQ-SF contains 40 items and each subscale has 8 measuring items. Table 6 displays some example items in each subscale of the MPQ. The MPQ was reviewed and discussed in the literature review chapter (see 3.2.2 for a more detailed discussion). The MPQ was selected because it had been successfully applied to the study of IC development in different populations (see table 3).

<sup>39</sup> This participant withdrew from the programme after the first interview.

<sup>40</sup> This participant withdrew from the interviews after the second-round.

<b>Open-mindedness</b>	<b>Cultural Empathy</b>	<b>Social Initiative</b>	<b>Emotional Stability</b>	<b>Flexibility</b>
Has a feeling for what is appropriate in a specific culture" (+);	"Notices when someone is in trouble" (+); "Sympathizes with others" (+), etc.	"Takes the lead" (+); "Is inclined to speak out" (-), etc.	"Keeps calm when things don't go well" (+); "Is under pressure" (-), etc.	"Works according to plan" (-); "Works mostly according to a strict scheme" (-), etc.

Table 8 Example Items in Each Dimension of the MPQ

In the first round of data collection, the survey was carried out in Induction week where a large number of students could be easily approached since students from different courses were gathered together in the same lecture room. However, during the post-survey, students were separated into their own courses so it became harder to collect data, especially in the Engineering discipline where there were a small number of students in each course. Besides, students from different programmes had different finishing dates. Consequently, there was a decrease in the number of student participants in the post-survey.

In the process of conducting surveys, a combination of multiple ways of responding is often used to maximize the potential number of participants (Dillman, et al., 2014). Therefore, in order to attract participants, an online survey was sent out to the Engineering school but the response rate was very low and only 14 students filled in the online version. For the first stage of quantitative data collection, 370 participants returned the MPQ survey (see Table 9).

	<b>Engineering (N=123)</b>	<b>Education (N=113)</b>	<b>Business (N=134)</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Female</b>	14.6% (N=18)	78.7% (N=89)	60.6% (N=80)
<b>Male</b>	79.7% (N=98) N/A: N=7	12.3% (N=14) N/A: N=10	34.8% (N=46) N/A: N=6
<b>Age</b>	20-25: 84 participants 26-30: 21 participants 31-35: 7 participants 36+: 3 participants N/A: 8 participants M=24.97	20-25: 89 participants 26-30: 11 participants 31-35: 1 participant 36+: 1 participant N/A: 11 participants M=23.75	20-25: 108 participants 26-30: 12 participants 31-35: 3 participants 36+: 1 participant N/A: 8 participants M=23.7

<b>Place of origin</b>	International: 45% (N=55) UK: 25.9% (N=30) EU: 25% (N=31) N/A: N=7	International: 55% (N=62) UK: 13.6% (N=14) EU: 24% (N=27) N/A: N=10	International: 56% (N=75) UK: 9.8% (N=12) EU: 28% (N=38) N/A: N=9
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Table 9 Demographic Information at Time 1

The following table shows participant demographics for the post-survey at Time 2 (see Table 10). Although these two groups of participants were not completely the same, the following table illustrates that the participants had similar backgrounds to participants from pre-survey. For example, in the Engineering school, there were more male participants (72.5%) than females (27.5%) while in the Education school, there were more female participants (89.3%) than male participants (10.7%). Furthermore, the age distribution in each discipline was similar from T1 to T2. This means that even though participants from T1 and T2 were not exactly the same, the analytical tests can still be performed since participants from T1 and T2 shared similar backgrounds and the majority of the participants from T1 to T2 were the same.

	<b>Engineering (N=42)</b>	<b>Education (N=84)</b>	<b>Business (N=101)</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Female</b>	27.5% (N=11)	89.3% (N=75)	55% (N=55)
<b>Male</b>	72.5% (N=29) N/A: N=3	10.7% (N=9) N/A: N=0	45% (N=45) N/A: N=1
<b>Age</b>	20-25: 25 participants 26-30: 10 participants 31-35: 1 participant 36+: 3 participants N/A: 4 participants M= 25.69	20-25: 65 participants 26-30: 14 participants 31-35: 3 participant 36+: 0 participant N/A: 2 participants M= 24.48	20-25: 77 participants 26-30: 16 participants 31-35: 6 participants 36+: 1 participant N/A: 1 participants M=24.81
<b>Place of origin</b>	International: 78.6% (N=33) UK: 19% (N=8) EU: 4.8% (N=2) N/A: N=0	International: 80.7% (N=67) UK: 10.8% (N=9) EU: 8.4% (N=7) N/A: N=1	International: 67% (N=67) UK: 10% (N=10) EU: 23% (N=23) N/A: N=1

Table 10 Demographic Information at Time 2

In addition to items incorporated from the MPQ, the survey invited participants to self-rate their satisfaction on their English language ability in both T1 and T2 surveys. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) was applied to items including ability in reading, writing, listening and speaking respectively. The higher the mean score, the higher the level of English proficiency, which to some degree, acts as an important predictor of student's adjustment outcome, as measured by students' self-confidence in their abilities (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997). A number of researchers (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997; Young et al., 2013) have used this scale to measure students' English ability. Young et al. (2013) also suggest that self-reporting of English ability is necessary and reasonable in measuring self-concept.

Student's prior overseas experience was measured by the following two questions: firstly, students were asked 'do you have any prior overseas experience before you came to the UK' (Yes or No)? Followed by the question 'if Yes, for what purpose (Study, Travel, or Business)?'. Besides, several demographic factors were also included in this survey, such as student number, the programme of study, age, gender, and country of origin.

#### **4.5 Qualitative Research Methods**

The interview was the selected qualitative research method for this study. It has been defined as 'a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation' (Cannell & Kahn, 1968, cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 351). It enables both interviewees and interviewers to discuss their interpretations of the world and express their own point of view on key issues (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). As a relatively flexible tool, the data is collected via multi-sensory channels: verbal, non-verbal, spoken, and heard, to aid more comprehensive understandings of the experience. One of the advantages of conducting interviews is that it can provide a greater depth of data than other methods of data collection. However, one disadvantage would be the tendency to be subjective and sometimes biased (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Bernard (1988) suggests that semi-structured interviews offer the most practical approach, as the set of questions can be prepared beforehand and generate reliable and comparable qualitative data.

Due to the complexity of postgraduate student experiences, apart from assessing IC in a quantitative way, through the survey, participants' perceptions and understanding were also taken into account. Semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most appropriate instrument to explore participants' perceptions (Seidman, 2013) about their academic and socio-cultural experiences and the pre-course factors and in-course factors that affected their IC development over time.

Before the interview participants were recruited, an invitation to the follow-up three-round interview with £10 participation reward was written at the bottom of the last page of the questionnaire. For those who were interested in taking part in the interviews, an email address was requested. In total 55 participants from the three disciplines responded to the interview invitation. An equal number of respondents were selected from each discipline based on the programme of study (Business, Education, and Engineering) and the country they come from (home and international students) and the interview invitations were sent out with an information sheet. 14 participants replied and remained willing to take part in interviews. Subsequently, the location and date were negotiated between the researcher and participants.

In the first week of the academic year (Oct/2016), along with the quantitative data, one-to-one student interviews (N=14) were conducted. Interviews took about 30 minutes to complete. The purpose of doing interviews at the very beginning stage was to gather perceptions at this essential and crucial time in terms of student expectations of one-year master's study and their initial feelings and thoughts about their learning environment. For the second-round interview (Feb/2017), the same group of students was contacted (N=14) via email. The purpose of this round of interviews was to monitor the change of students' intercultural experiences academically and socioculturally. One participant had dropped out of his programme and he was no longer able to participate. Before the end of the taught element of programmes (Jun/2017), 13 participants were contacted for the third-round semi-structured interviews but again one participant dropped out.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

This section introduces two approaches to data analysis: the usage of SPSS to analyse the quantitative data (see 4.6.1) and content analysis to analyse the interview data (see 4.6.2).



#### **4.6.1 Quantitative analysis**

Numerical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel 2003 and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), which is the most widely used analysis method in social science research (Bryman & Cramer, 2002). In order to analyse the baseline (T1) as well as the endline (T2) data, SPSS was used and the measures of central tendencies were tabulated. The descriptive measurements, including mean, mode, median and standard deviation in each subscale (OM, FL, CE, ES and SI), were compared and contrasted firstly within the same discipline (to investigate how the IC subscales changed among students in each discipline over the whole academic year) and secondly across disciplines (to compare the similarities and differences on IC subscales across different disciplines). Lastly, home and international students' IC were compared across each subscale of IC. Independent variables included gender, prior overseas experience, and English language ability while the dependent variables were the MPQ subscales that measure IC. Four analytical measurements were adopted: analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent-sample t-test, paired-sample t-test, and correlation coefficient. ANOVA was conducted to compare the IC five subscale means and standard deviations among students who come from different disciplines (Business, Education, and Engineering) at two stages: T1 and T2. Independent-sample t-test was performed to compare IC scores and subscales between home and international students at two stages. The value at the sig (2-tailed) under t-test for the means was checked to see if it is less than 0.05 (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). A paired-sample t-test was used to compare IC development from T1 to T2 within different disciplines. Lastly, the correlation coefficient between IC and international students' English language ability was measured. Pearson r value is a measurement of the strength between variables. If r value is bigger than 0.5, there is a strong correlation, while r values between 0.3 and 0.5 indicate moderate correlation; r values between 0.1 and 0.3 indicate a small correlation (Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2014).

#### **4.6.2 Qualitative analysis**

After organising and transcribing the interview data, the data was analysed by hand rather than by computer since the interview database was relatively small and the content could easily be tracked and located; this also provided the opportunity to look at the transcriptions closely and carefully (Creswell, 2012). The data was read through, highlighted by hand, and grouped and colour coded. Content analysis was

adopted in this study to analyse the interview transcripts. This is a popular and appropriate analytical approach in qualitative studies for data reduction (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In this process 'many words of texts are classified into much fewer categorises' (Weber, 1990, p. 15), using a series of procedures to make valid assumptions from texts (Weber, 1990). Coding is 'the translation of question responses and respondent information to specific categorises for the purpose of analysis' (Kerlinger, 1970, cited in Cohen et al, 2011, p.559). It is a process of reading and judgement, involving continually revisiting and reviewing the data until the useful data has been coded and summarised into different themes and categories (Yang & Miller, 2008, p. 689), to reveal the underlying meaning and ideas of words or phrases and produce a truthful and accurate reflection of the data (Hancock, 2002). The following table is an example of how the interview data was coded into different themes. According to the theory of pragmatism, the codes were generated based on firstly, the primary literature; secondly, students' own accounts. These codes were categorised as 'culture shock', 'social contact', 'social activity', 'culture shock', 'culture knowledge', 'curriculum', 'assessment/group work', 'English ability', 'impact on future plan', 'challenges', and 'IC development'. These codes were broadly grouped into three themes: 'internationalisation of higher education', 'academic experience' and 'socio-cultural experience'. Some comments<sup>41</sup> or themes were overlapping and it was difficult to determine where they should be categorised among several codes. The analysis chapter was structured according to the themes developed from the data.

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<sup>41</sup> The 'comments' section in table 11 was the direct quotes from interviewees.

Broad Themes	Themes	Comments		
		T1	T2	T3
IoHE	Understanding of IoHE	Diverse students, the course is international, international staff, make things easier for all students, overseas campus.	My class is not international as many people from the same country. Accepting differences.	Segregation between students is hardly international. Hard to make local friends.
Socio-cultural experiences	Social contact	Want to meet lots of people and have a lot of international exposure	Limited chances and time to social. I don't find British people are approachable. Met lots of people from different countries and views.	It's easier to get along with people from your own culture, who speak your own language. It's a bit hard to mingle with British students. I don't have many chances to interact verbally. I won't make much effort to make life here.
	Social activity	Join more activities to know about the culture. I want to attend different societies.	Difficult to balance study and social life. I don't have much social life. I am not that curious so just want to focus on study. I prefer to stay at home.	More social now, Try to meet up with friends as we will graduate soon. Part-time job.
	Culture shock	When I walk on the street, people come to hug you, I don't know if they get drunk or not. For me, it is also a cultural shock	I am looking at their culture the way the hang out and stuff, that's them, it's not wrong either and I actually feel blurry. The drinking culture is hard to be accepted.	I still feel like I am not belonging to this community, I don't want to say racism but to some extent, I still feel that I am kind of different from local people, my style is different.
	Culture knowledge	I think I actually cannot tell a lot... I think I know English culture quite well.	I spent my time with Asian students so I feel like the culture is still the same. I would say a little bit more. Not that much. I spent a lot of time reading books so I didn't really learn the culture.	I learned a lot about English culture even other cultures. I learned new things about other cultures, some new words from different languages.

Academic experiences	Curriculum	I choose this programme because it's international. I hope to have international cases rather than only UK.	We have some international perspectives, other countries' cases in teaching materials.	It emphasises the context so we need to draw on different context in our essay.
	Assessment/ group work	N/A	Communication breakdown: misunderstanding, confusions, frustrating, exhausting.	That prepares me to work in an international environment with people from different backgrounds. Challenging but rewarding. Difficult to work in groups. Management issues rather than culture differences.
	English language ability	Difficult to understand local accents.	I have problems in communicating. I try to communicate in English.	I improved my reading and writing but not sure about speaking. I improved my writing but have limited chance to speak.
	Impact on a future plan	I have a scholarship from my government so I need to come back. I would like to get a job either in UK, Europe or anywhere...	I feel I am not putting high standard anymore... It seems so scary to have a plan, I am just so afraid to make plans now.	I still want to stay here a little bit longer. As soon as I have an opportunity to study abroad, I think I will definitely grab it.
Challenges		Homesick. Difficult to be involved in local life. Nervous about the workload. Different learning and teaching styles.	I really feel very lonely, homesick. A negative experience in communicating. Academic stress, anxious about exams.	Fewer challenges. More adapted.
IC Development		N/A	I become more open-minded. More independent and calm. More thoughtful and critical, more patient.	More empathetic, more understanding. More adapted so less pressure. More confident.

Table 11 an Example for Coding the Interview Data

## 4.7 Ethical Concerns

The university requires ethical approval from Ethics Approval Committees before carrying out any research projects that involve human participants. Since this study involves student participants, prior to conducting this project, the University Ethics Form was submitted and this study was deemed to be 'low-risk'. Before collecting the data, the degree programme directors (DPD) in each school were contacted and informed of the study. An information sheet was attached in every email (Appendix A). After receiving permission to access the students, it was possible to collect survey data at the end of their classes. Participants received an information sheet to brief them about the research project, approximate time required, the voluntary nature of participation, assurance of anonymity, and data confidentiality (Appendix A). After obtaining their permission, the survey was distributed to them with introductory information and a consent form. Students were only identified with their student ID to protect their anonymity<sup>42</sup>. At the end of the survey, a short message was written to invite participants to the follow-up interviews. Those who were interested wrote their email addresses so that they might be contacted. A three-round interview invitation email with an information sheet was sent out to each potential participant who had expressed interest in taking part in the interviews.

Similarly, prior to the conduct of the interviews, students completed a consent form which asked for their consent to the use of voice recording, and clarified the voluntary nature of participation (the freedom to withdraw at any time), assurance of anonymity, and data confidentiality. Informed consent protects and respects participants' right of self-determination and right to 'choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions' (Diener & Crandall, 1978, p.57). It requires competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension. Competence implies participants are mature enough to be capable of making decisions with the relevant information. Voluntarism means participants freely choose to participate after knowing potential risks of taking part in the study. Full information implies that consent is fully informed and comprehension ensures that participants fully understand the nature of the study. All the above elements were discussed with participants before they signed the consent form.

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<sup>42</sup> Student ID is required for inputting survey data, not for revealing their identities.

The aim of anonymity is that the information provided by participants must not identify themselves (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). It requires that all student and staff participants' data are anonymised so that nobody can identify the participant from the information and the data they provided. Confidentiality can be assured and protected by obtaining signed statements, indicating non-disclosure of the information and strict procedures for access to the data (Cooper & Schindler, 2001, p. 117). Both consent form and information sheet were provided to participants prior to data collection i.e. at each stage of interview and questionnaire data collection.

After briefing them about the research and obtaining their permission, individual interviews were arranged based on participants' availability. The interviews were conducted in a quiet library study room where only the researcher and the participant were present. In order to protect the privacy of participants, all the private information such as their names and the institution they study at were anonymised. Furthermore, all the survey and interview data were kept in a safe place accessible only to the researcher, for example, a locker was used to keep all the surveys and interview transcriptions and a password required computer was used for saving the electronic version of the data.

#### **4.8 Limitations of the Research Design**

One of the limitations of this study was the sample size for the quantitative data collection as a larger sample size may enable more generalisable results. Moreover, the participants that attended the pre- and post-survey in this study were not exactly the same group of students due to the sample attrition. More consistent results could be generated if both pre- and post-survey participants remained the same group. With respect to the use of the MPQ survey and semi-structured interviews, both served as self-reported data that fully relied on students' self-perceptions and hence may be biased to some extent (Takahashi, 2009). Sometimes participants can be too shy to reveal their private stories in the interviews or they sometimes could exaggerate their experiences. Their feelings at that moment can influence their answers when filling out the questionnaire or participating in the interview.

As this study explored postgraduate taught students' intercultural experiences over a nine-month timespan, the results were limited to students' perceptions as they completed the first two terms of their one-year postgraduate studies. The final three-month dissertation period was not included because the third

term does not have any teaching and is mainly designed for students to write up their own dissertation. The study aims to explore IoC and its impact on PGT students' IC. An investigation of the first two terms that consist of 'taught' element is desirable. However, it would be interesting to learn how students' sociocultural experiences have changed during a whole academic year and how does that impact students' IC in future studies.

It should be pointed out that the data instruments were skewed towards international students to some extent, given the demographics of the programmes under study. In the interview schedules, questions such as 'why do you choose to study abroad', 'can you tell me what do you remember most about your studying abroad experience' were specifically designed for international students. In addition, the MPQ has widely been used for international students in terms of their intercultural adaptation, hence some of the items are skewed to sojourners rather than home students. Some of the demographic information was sought and aimed at international students by asking them to self-rate their English ability. However, the questionnaire also took into consideration that 'home students' may have included people for whom English is a second/foreign language. This did not prove to be the case as all 'home' participants in the study were native speakers of English.

Regarding data collection and data analysis, most of the questionnaire and interview participants were international and EU students. This reflected the actual student demographics in the three disciplines, i.e. more international and EU students than home students and hence most of the analysed data were from international students' perspectives.

There were several limitations that were specifically associated with the interviews. First of all, the students who were willing to participate in this study may have been more confident and open-minded with better English skills than a general student cohort. Caution must therefore be taken in assuming that the results yielded from this study could be applied to a larger group (Young et al., 2013). With regard to the fact that most of the interview participants were not native English speakers, a further limitation may relate to their ability to fully express themselves in English. Although participants can be expected to have achieved an IELTS score of 6.5, there may be cultural differences in their willingness and/or ability to express their feelings in English. Last but not least, during the interviews, students, especially home students, may be reticent about expressing negative views about international students due to the fact that they perceived the researcher as an international

student. Thus, one might speculate that the research could generate different results if the interviewer was from the home country.

#### **4.9 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter provides a rationale for, and an overview of the mixed methods approach that has been adopted in this study. Based on the pragmatic paradigm, the study combined both deductive (quantitative) and inductive (qualitative) approaches to provide triangulated data on students' IC development during the taught phase of one-year master's studies. The participants were studying in three schools: Education, Engineering, and Business at a British university. The MPQ survey was utilised twice: at the beginning and at the end of nine months to investigate the development of their IC. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews have been conducted three times: at the beginning, at the mid and at the end of nine months, which were used to explore their intercultural experiences overtime. In this study, statistical analysis in SPSS was adopted to analyse the quantitative data while content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.



## **Chapter 5. Students' Intercultural Experiences and IC Development**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, students' intercultural experiences were analysed from three main dimensions: the students' and staff understanding of internationalisation, students' pre-course factors, and in-course factors arising from students' academic and socio-cultural experiences (see Figure 9). To begin with, academic staff and students' understanding of internationalisation and their perceptions of the internationalisation of the host university were investigated. This was necessary to answer the first research question which deals with 'how are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood/perceived by staff and students among different disciplines?' (section 5.2).

In the second part, students' pre-course factors were analysed in relation to their intercultural experiences (section 5.3). Four contributory factors that were considered were students' prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language proficiency, and gender differences. Learning motivations in this study were conceptualised as the reasons why students come to study a Master Degree in the host university and what they want to achieve during their studies. The influences of these three variables on IC were investigated in conjunction with both qualitative and quantitative findings. This was designed to address the second research question in this study that is 'how do pre-course factors affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?' In relation to in-course factors, students' academic experience (section 5.4) and socio-cultural experience (section 5.5) were explored. This was necessary to address the last research question which proposes in this study, 'What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development?'

Students' and staff perceptions of the university's internationalisation and their understandings of IC were gathered in order to investigate how internationalisation was understood and how it affected teaching and student experience. Students' perceptions towards their academic and socio-cultural experiences were also investigated in relation to the learning environment, curriculum, assessment, language proficiency, social activity, social contact and intercultural adaptation. Students' perceptions in relation to these themes were captured during three different stages of their academic year (i.e. T1, T2, and T3). In

this way, students' views towards their experiences can be reviewed comprehensively during their study at the host university.

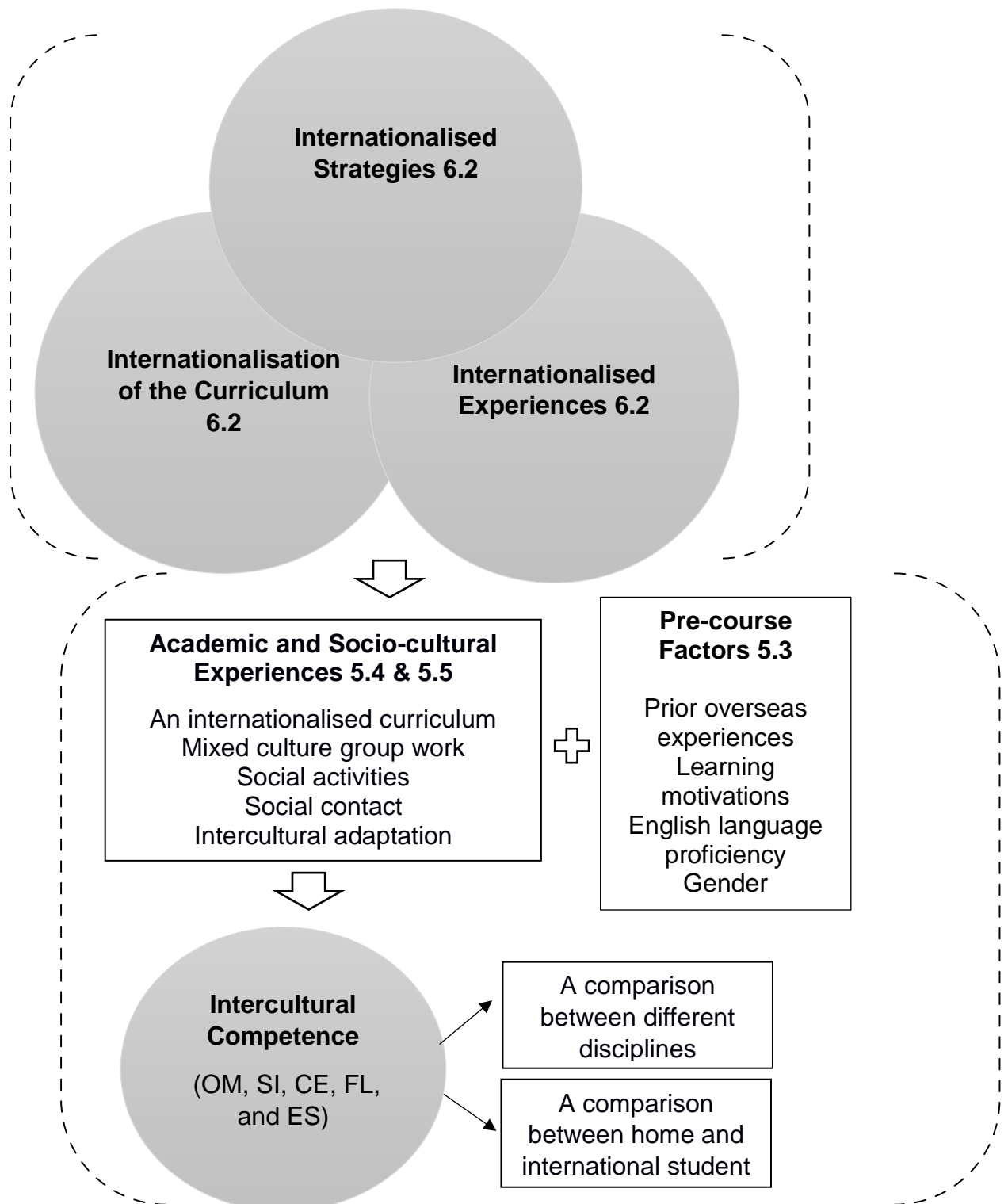


Figure 9 Conceptual Framework for Analysis

## **5.2 Understandings of an internationalised university**

The term 'internationalisation of higher education' can be perceived differently by different groups of people due to their unique experiences and different social and/or academic responsibilities. In the context of HEIs, stakeholders, academic staff, and students are seen as three important groups of individuals that directly influence and are influenced by a university's internationalisation strategy. For this reason, considering the views of students and staff is vital in understanding internationalisation and intercultural competence. Therefore, students and staff from the host university were interviewed in order to understand how internationalisation affected them in different respects and how do they see intercultural competence in the context of internationalisation. In this section, the perceptions of the participants regarding HE internationalisation and intercultural competence were analysed and compared among different disciplines. This section aims to answer the first research question:

- How are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood by staff and students across different disciplines within the host university, and are there differences between these understandings?

It is important to mention that students' understandings and perceptions of internationalisation and intercultural competence were collected at the beginning and at the end of the taught programme, focusing on their attitudes change, while staff's understandings were only collected at one time since the development element is not salient in this case. Staff in this study have years of teaching experiences in the host university and their attitudes change is hard to observe over a nine-month time, therefore, instead of tracking their attitudes' change, it was more important to collect their thoughts on studying in an 'internationalised' university. On the other hand, since student participants were studying in the host university for the first time, it was felt that it would be more valuable to track their experiences and perceptions over time in order to evaluate the impact of formal and informal curriculum on students' intercultural experiences.

### **5.2.1 Students' perceptions and experiences of an internationalised university**

#### *At the beginning of the programme*

Student interviewees gave many reasons to explain to what extent they perceived the host university as internationalised. The majority of the participants mentioned a

high ratio of international students' presence on campus or on their course/class as a direct way to 'see' the diversity and internationalisation in the host university:

I guess most of universities in the UK are having large proportion of foreign students. (D, home, EEE, T1)

...here there are a lot of different nationalities. (S, home, EEE, T1)

Most of the international participants not only stated the fact that there were many international students around them, but they also added their personal positive feelings towards this diversity. For example, a participant expressed that people from different cultural backgrounds are friendly to each other. People with differences can coexist in this place and this makes the university internationalised:

I saw a lot of people from different cultures, different races, different nationalities and they are very friendly to each other and I found it is great. (P, international, EDU, T1)

Other than regarding the recruitment of large numbers of international students as criteria for being internationalised, some other external factors were mentioned by a few interviewees, such as the presence of international teaching staff and overseas campus setup:

...the teachers are from many countries. (A, international, Business, T1)

...some of them have campuses abroad as well. (D, home, EEE, T1)

In addition to the above three indicators that were frequently brought up by students, some participants pointed out that HE internationalisation should mean the university is able to make things easier for its students. Especially international students, as this would make them 'feel' welcome and comfortable. For example, one participant directly refers to this by mentioning the prayer room specifically dedicated to Muslim students. This shows the openness of the host university to all cultures and religions. Other platforms and activities including in-session English language learning opportunities and a welcome week that helps students to adapt more quickly to this new environment. Others mentioned an easy process of registration and effective administration and student services. All these examples indicate that the university is well-prepared for accommodating a large number of international students:

I think the university is really helpful coz they have lots of platforms for international students to have fast adaptation...it's very good as well coz they have prayer room. (F, international, CCC, T1)

Everyone is friendly for people from abroad since before you are coming here from emails sent by them and the administration process is easy. (R, international, EEE, T1)

It is worth noting that a number of mature home students and international students addressed the importance of students' international learning experience as an indicator to define an internationalised university. They believed that the number of international students should not be the reason to justify a university as being internationalised or not. Instead, it should be a factor in recognising them as a valuable asset. International students brought different ways of learning and different experiences with them to the home campus:

...it's a university that recognises the value in attracting students from around the world to study because they bring a wealth of different ways of learning with them which are really interesting to be recognised and to share. (B, home, EDU, T1)

Some students reported that studying in an internationalised university could help them to learn more about other cultures and other perspectives and therefore to become more open-minded. It also helped them to know how people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds think and do things differently, which may benefit them in the future workplace. Being in an internationalised learning environment helped them start to think about how being open-minded and tolerant can reduce culture and language barriers for a better communication result, despite the fact that most participants did not know what is 'intercultural competence':

I think by then I would know how people from each country work based on their perspectives and their cultures...so I think that would benefit me for the future to know if...it would benefit me for having basic ideas about each different person. (F, international, CCC, T1)

Cultural differences definitely make you learn new things, and you become more tolerant. (R, EU, Business, T1)

I think wherever you go into a workplace after university, it's not just one country of workplace, everyone's there, you have to internationalise it so things are beneficial. But I didn't sign up for the course of knowing it will be this much mixed but it's a bonus really. (S, home, EEE, T1)

When we mix the people, we learn about the other culture, the other habits, so even about eating habits, about study habits, about many things. How to communicate with them. What is polite and what is impolite in different cultures. (A, international, Business, T1)

Similarly, one student interviewee reported that the university's mission statement indicated that OM and tolerance should be seen as important criteria related to the

university's enactment of internationalisation. The participant went on to give an example of how her module leader showed empathy and respect to everyone and valued individual differences. Only when the university begins to acknowledge the importance of having an ever expanding and internationalised body of students, can the essence of being an internationalised university be recognised:

The mission statement should be open-minded and accept differences. I think it is an important standard to be internationalised... so I think the university does very well on its mission statement-a good attitude towards otherness and think broadly. (O, international, TESOL, T1)

In general, students tended to mention five aspects of what they understood to be HE internationalisation but they showed little understanding of IC. They believed that an internationalised university:

- Has a large number of international students.
- Has international staff and oversea campuses.
- Helps international students to feel welcomed and to adapt easily to life and learning.
- Helps students to learn from people with different cultural backgrounds.
- Advocates for OM respect and tolerance to otherness.

Under this theme, the data did not show many disciplinary differences regarding students' understandings of HE internationalisation. At the beginning of the programme, students showed, by and large, positive attitudes towards the university's internationalisation. Nine months into their studies, their attitudes had changed according to their experiences.

#### *At the end of the programme*

After nine months of study in the host university, some participants expressed that although they were studying in an 'internationalised' university due to the diverse student population, they commented on the lack of communication and interaction among them. It is worth noting that some students were inclined to associate nationality with culture and they perceived home and international students as 'they' and 'we'.

I didn't feel that was multicultural, yea we were from different countries but when some, let's say British students is one party and international students is another party. (E, international, EEE, T3)

I think I talked to you about this before like the diversity of my classes, that's not that diverse as I expected... (P, international, TESOL, T3)

I am not very satisfied with my learning environment. It may be because I didn't feel I am fully integrated into it. (L, international, EDU, T3)

Others viewed 'multicultural' as individuals with different viewpoints, however, it was more naturally linked with people from different countries:

I understand is, yes certainly a number of various viewpoints, intrinsically associated with the countries that people come from is natural, you know national boundaries that set these differences. A number of different backgrounds and countries that's why would consider this multicultural aspect of the studies. (B, international, Business, T3)

It is also noteworthy that some students viewed the host university as 'internationalised' since their friends and course mates were multicultural, however, in terms of the curriculum<sup>43</sup>, it was viewed as a UK-based education system and standard and therefore not very internationalised:

I feel like we are studying with British kind of standard so the learning environment I would say is British education system but the friends would be multicultural but other than that, even the way the lecturer teaches would be just the way English lecturers would teach, so there is nothing multicultural, the friends definitely (F, international, EDU, T3).

At this point, it seems that students had a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of internationalisation. At the beginning of the programme, students reported positively on the diversity of the student population and they regarded an exchange of different perspectives and a general open-minded environment on campus as their understandings of an 'internationalised' university. However, after nine months of their studies, they mentioned some new aspects of being an internationalised university, which were different from what they perceived nine months previously. They noted that an 'internationalised' university is not only about the number of international students or staff, but also about intercultural interactions among diverse student populations and an internationalised curriculum that is not only using the UK-based standard to teach and evaluate students. Few differences were found among different disciplines, as well as home and international students' perceptions. In general, students tended to associate culture with nationality throughout the interviews.

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<sup>43</sup> Curriculum will be discussed in more detail in 5.4.1

### **5.2.2 Staff understandings of an internationalised university**

Differing from students' understanding and interpretation of internationalisation, the majority of staff participants regarded teaching and research as two main elements of internationalisation. Specifically, as the university has continued to receive a large number of international students over the last few years, academic staff have started to consider whether their programmes and teaching are appropriate for international students on a day to day basis. Regarding the international research partnerships and collaborations, staff interviewees tend to believe that as a research-intensive university, international research partnerships should be an important part of the university's internationalisation strategy:

...the teaching element obviously should clearly be in there...but also I think research should be part of this... (S1, female, Business)

I do think that research collaborations are really important...and then there is a teaching part because the income from international students is hugely important... (S3, male, Education)

There were a few staff participants who perceived internationalisation as mainly comprising of the recruitment of international students and developing external collaborations with international companies or other universities in order to improve the host university's reputation in the world:

...bring more students to the university and if so I guess it's all about developing links with other external, foreign companies or universities institutions to recognise the university... (S4, male, Engineering)

In addition, although staff reported that students' experiences were seen as an important aspect of internationalisation, differences were observed among staff from Education and Engineering schools.

Education staff believed that the student experience is important and that this can be facilitated so that international students enjoy their overseas experiences with few adaptation difficulties. This translates to the students having a more productive study experience and enjoyable social life. It means they are able to develop their IC. Home students, on the other hand, could enhance their intercultural awareness by living and learning with people from other cultures. In light of internationalisation, the university and staff should prepare their students to be open-minded and to develop an internationalised mind-set to live and work in an increasingly interconnected world. Staff participants regarded internationalisation as a means for people to



recognise the benefits that different students from different cultural backgrounds bring to the home campus, not only economically, but also culturally and intellectually:

...the university I think has been slowly waking up to the importance of working at making that overseas study experience but enjoyable, productive and truly cross cultural so those the two elements that I particularly have in mind. (S3, male, Education)

I guess it's about creating an awareness of different cultures in a very positive way so celebrating the fact that we as a university, we have a multicultural community of both students and staff...recognise the university not just the nature of the staff and students within university but also the nature of university in the world... (S2, female, Education)

They reckoned that home students who chose to study this course were already very open-minded towards differences. It was largely due to the nature of the Education programme which reflected 'international perspectives' since students who applied for this programme were experienced teachers or teachers-to-be who worked or intended to work in HEIs and were reported to be open-minded:

The UK students who come onto the program are already very interested in internationalisation and very open-minded generally, some find it really easy to mix with other people... (S2, female, Education)

Nearly all the home students that are in the modules are teachers and they might be in higher education...and I think that teacher readily respond to the sorts of messages and encouragements, they tend to be open-minded and those teachers who are not open-minded, probably not gonna come and do higher education courses so I think they are fairly willing (S3, male, Education).

On the contrary, staff in the Business programme believed that UK students were not open-minded enough to accept the fact that studying in a culturally diverse environment can actually help them:

...students were very resistant to the idea that they would be studying with people from different country...I don't think there was openness to new experiences and the fact that they actually will be working with people from different backgrounds...there is always this assumption that we are best, why can't the others be like us... (S1, female, Business)

Engineering staff also mentioned the student experience. They emphasised the importance of developing students' employability skills, i.e. the skills required for the workplace, but were less likely to focus on 'soft' skills development. The skills that were seen as important by participants were subject specific skills including

communication and presentation. Some generic skills, such as research and writing were also identified as important. With these skills, students could succeed in working anywhere in the world. Fundamentally, the educators' aim is to teach their students to be life-long learners:

... the skills that are appropriate for the workplace, with the workplace been potentially anywhere in the world...how to find information, how to interrogate data and check its viability and validity, and then also I think in relation to some generic skills about writing as well, so how to present information in a coherent report format, whether that's a technical report or something that's more of sales type report. So communication, writing and research literature stuff. (S5, female, Engineering)

In general, there were three main qualities that staff tended to perceive as characteristic of an internationalised university:

- teaching meets all students' needs
- international research collaborations are promoted
- positive students' experiences are prioritised (learning outcomes)

With regard to which aspects of the student experience the university should prioritise as part of its internationalisation strategy, staff gave different explanations across different disciplines. Staff from the Engineering school prioritised the development of students' employability skills. The reason being that students should be in a position where they are capable of working anywhere in the world. Education staff believed in the importance of developing students' awareness and OM towards others in order to build a more interconnected world. Although with a different focus on students' experience and development, they all acknowledged that students should be prepared with the abilities that enable them to live and work in the globalised world. However, regarding staff's perceptions of internationalisation, few differences were found among different disciplines, except that staff from the Education discipline felt that their students were open-minded in general since they were or will be teachers working in higher education institutions, whilst staff from the Business discipline believed that home students were not open-minded enough to work with people from other countries because they have not seen the benefits for doing so.

### **5.3 Pre-course Factors and Intercultural Competence**

Student participants' pre-course factors were investigated. This included prior overseas experiences, personal learning motivations, English language proficiency and factors related to gender differences (see Figure 9). These four dimensions have been identified as potential fundamental factors affecting students' intercultural experiences and IC development. This section aims to answer the second research question:

- How do pre-course factors affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

It is important to note that in this section, both quantitative and qualitative data are presented cross-sectionally. The study aimed to investigate the correlation between factors such as prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language proficiency, gender and intercultural competence. These three variables were pre-determined factors, which were unlikely to change while undertaking a PGT degree. Hence, cross-sectional data was more appropriate in this sense. However, in terms of students' English language proficiency, the study focuses on two aspects. Firstly, the study aims to investigate whether international students'<sup>44</sup> English abilities improved over nine months of studying abroad. Secondly, whether their English ability and IC were positively correlated to each other.

#### **5.3.1 Student prior overseas experiences**

Drawing on the quantitative data, prior overseas experience was reported by students and a t-test showed that students with prior overseas experience had higher Mean scores in every IC subscale than those without any prior overseas experiences. Differences in scores for CE, SI, and OM were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). For more detailed information see below (see table 12).

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<sup>44</sup> International students in this study were not native English speakers.

		<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE</b>	Yes (N=148)	3.90	.46			
	No (N=73)	3.72	.46	2.788	219	.006*
<b>FL</b>	Yes	2.70	.57			
	No	2.65	.57	.598	219	.550
<b>SI</b>	Yes	3.36	.56			
	No	3.08	.39	3.827	219	.000*
<b>OM</b>	Yes	3.60	.44			
	No	3.39	.44	3.373	219	.001*
<b>ES</b>	Yes	3.03	.64			
	No	3.02	.65	.134	219	.893

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 12 Comparison between Students with and without Prior Overseas Experience on IC Subscales

Data showed that students who had prior overseas experience for studying purposes scored more highly on CE, SI, OM, and ES than those for travelling or business visiting. However, only SI and OM showed a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ).

		<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE</b>	Study (N=74)	3.94	.45			
	Travel or Business (N=70)	3.86	.49	1.117	142	.266
<b>FL</b>	Study	2.64	.60			
	Travel or Business	2.78	.53	-1.562	142	.120
<b>SI</b>	Study	3.48	.59			
	Travel or Business	3.23	.51	2.704	142	.008*
<b>OM</b>	Study	3.72	.39			
	Travel or Business	3.48	.47	3.282	142	.001*
<b>ES</b>	Study	3.07	.61			
	Travel or Business	2.99	.67	.699	142	.486

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 13 Prior Overseas Experience for Studying and Traveling Purpose Comparison on IC Subscales

For the background knowledge, most of the interview participants in this study had prior overseas experience with only three international (Chinese) interviewees reporting no previous overseas experience. The majority of participants who had prior overseas experiences only had been abroad as tourists, but for mature students, their prior overseas experiences were likely to have been in long term for work (more than one year) while the younger participants identified their overseas experiences as limited to short term stays mostly through travelling with family or as exchange students:

I lived in France in 2001 for a year period. I've been lived in South Africa in 2000 and 2001 again playing rugby and also I sort of lived in Canada in Quebec for a year. (M, home, Business, T1)

I've been abroad to a couple of countries, like I've been to Philippines and Taiwan, Russia, Malaysia as well. (F, international, CCC, T1)

It has been observed that participants who identify as mature home students in general, had more long term overseas experience in comparison to the younger home, EU and international students. At the same time, the younger home students mentioned previous internship opportunities, for example teaching English in another country.

I worked in China this year and a year around and then I've just travelled, going to the places Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe but it's only casual. (S, home, EEE, T1)

A few international students reported their long term prior overseas experience generally for study purposes and others for short term travelling:

I have studied Bachelor of Electronics Engineering in Malaysia...I've been to Turkey, China when I was a kid, I've been in Thailand and Emirates. (E, international, EEE, T1)

In the first round of interviews, participants reported a wide range of prior overseas experiences, so it seemed worthwhile to explore how prior overseas experience affected individual's IC. Participants' prior overseas experiences were discussed in relation to their intercultural experiences in the interviews, supported by students' IC subscale scores and their prior overseas experiences measured in the MPQ after nine months into their studies. To sum up, the findings showed that students with prior overseas experiences scored significantly higher in CE, SI, and OM than those without any prior overseas experiences. Furthermore, for those who have prior overseas experiences, it presented that students with prior studying overseas experiences scored significantly higher in SI and OM than those who had prior travelling or business overseas experiences. Further analysis of students' prior overseas experiences was linked with their socio-cultural experiences, which can be found in section 5.5.

### **5.3.2 Student learning motivations**

It seems that home and international students have very different learning motivations behind their choice to study in one-year postgraduate programmes in the host university. In general, home students appeared to have clearer plans regarding what they want to do after getting the degree than their international and EU

counterparts. Most of the international and EU students' motivations to study in the host university were not primarily to meet career goals since many of them did not have specific career plans at this early stage. While home students had more specific career-oriented motivation to get a Master Degree for achieving a particular career goal. It was often the case that home students reported that the host university was the only one that offered the programme they needed. For example, participant D had always wanted to become an engineer, and he came to the host university due to the fact that it accepted students with a first degree in Physics to study a Master Degree in Engineering:

The job I wanted needs an engineering degree and I don't have one. (D, home, Engineering, T1)

Now I am just getting for a year of hard work and I am done with the education (S, home, Engineering, T1)

Similarly, student participant B from CCC programme mentioned that the reason he chose to do this MA degree was because he knew there was a need to provide cross-cultural training in the business sector. After studying this programme, he aimed to set up his own business to provide training services to company staff who may need the knowledge and skills to work effectively in a mixed cultural working environment or to work abroad:

The main reason to come back to university was because I tried to start a company in France. (B, home, CCC, T1)

As for the international and EU students, apart from achieving academic success and becoming more competitive with a Master Degree, most of them expressed complex reasons why they chose to study at the host university. International students tended to mention the sacrifices they made to study in the UK compared with their host counterparts, in terms of higher tuition fees and being far away from home and family. It was not surprising that the motivations for international students to study in the UK comprised of many aspects. This included but was not limited to enhancing employment chances. Participants also expressed a need to seek international exposure, experience living abroad alone, learn new things and new perspectives, improve their language skills, pursue a better education or get opportunities for scholarships:

...so looking to get some international exposure and experiences. (A, International, Business, T1)

I want to experience living in an international environment and learning new things, both academic and social things. (P, International, Education, T1)

Compared with the international and EU participants, most of the home students believed that studying in their home country was a less novel and exciting experience and therefore it was nothing different from their previous study experiences. But one thing that they found surprising was that on their course, there was a high percentage of international students which they have never experienced before in any of their previous education experiences. They reported it as a 'big change':

In my previous undergraduate, it was 100% English while this course is I think 70% Asian and very limited English. (M, home, Business, T1)

Now my course [percentage of] overseas gone to 80% where before it was 1%, 0% so it's a big change in that definitely. (S, home, EEE, T1)

It might be anticipated that international students would encounter more difficulties and challenges when they travel abroad to study by themselves, however, home students also experienced some changes when studying in their home country. Participating students noted that they also experienced adjustment difficulties in the transition to postgraduate studies. The following subsection introduced the third personal factor that may affect students' IC development.

Interview data showed distinct motivations for home and international students who chose to study at the host university. Home students were more career-oriented while international and EU students' motivations were more all-rounded, such as gaining international outlook and experiencing a new culture. However, the quantitative data did not show much differences between home and international students who share a different learning motivation. Home students scored significantly higher for SI at both T1 and T2 than international students. Further analysis on home and international students' differences refer to section 5.6.2.

### **5.3.3 English language proficiency**

Students' self-rated English language ability was measured at both T1 (at the beginning of the programme) and T2 (at the end of the taught-element) in order to observe and compare their English ability before and after studying abroad. It is important to note that the self-rated English language ability measurement was only

taken from those whose first language was not English. Table 14 shows measures of central tendency (Mean) for reading, writing, listening, and speaking subscales. A paired-sample t-test suggested that international participants in this study significantly improved their writing,  $t(191) = -3.27, p < .01$ ; and speaking skills,  $t(191) = -2.42, p < .01$  over nine months.

	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b>
<b>Time 1</b>				
M	3.72	3.04	3.45	3.12
SD	.96	1.02	1.04	1.09
<b>Time 2</b>				
M	3.80	3.37*	3.67	3.33*
SD	1.03	.98	1.06	1.04

\*significant at  $p < .01$

Table 14 Measures of International Students' English Language Ability Subscale at T1 and T2

This was supported by the interview data with the majority of participants believing that they had improved their English ability while a few of them said they did not improve their English that much. Language issues were reported as ongoing concerns that they were facing throughout the year. Most of the international students, in general, thought their English had improved after nine months but it was still something they experienced as challenging:

I still have difficulties in understanding some people from England, local people, their accent, that's the main difficulty maybe. Of course, I still have difficulties in understanding the materials sometimes (Y, international, EEE, T3)

For those who did not improve their English, they revealed that they had limited opportunity to speak English while others felt their English was already good enough before they came to the UK and hence, there was limited room to improve. When they were asked 'how do you feel about your English ability compared to the day you arrived?' Some of them felt they had improved their listening and speaking skills while others believed they had particularly improved their reading and writing skills. For those who were actively involved in social activities and had more international contacts, they appeared to have been more likely to develop their speaking and listening skills over time.



I hope it has improved somehow by spending almost a year here, talking all the time in English, just by practice, I guess it has become a little bit better. (I, international, EEE, T3)

Maybe it's getting easier for me to listen to when British people speak especially in the public places...it's easier to catch when they are saying. (F, international, CCC, T3)

I think it developed, especially in reading and writing... I still don't understand local people (D, international, EDU, T3)

Table 15 and Table 16 further reveal the correlations between IC subscales and English ability subscales at T1 and T2 respectively. It shows that international students' speaking and listening skills correlated with their SI and OM but FL was not correlated with one's English ability. The correlation coefficient of students' speaking skills and SI is 0.319 at T1 and 0.316 at T2. Since  $r$  is between 0.3 and 0.5, they have a moderately strong correlation.

Correlations - Time 1		R1	W1	S1	L1
<b>CE1</b>	Pearson Correlation	.183**	.089	.132	.234**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.208	.061	.001
<b>FL1</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.034	.074	.038	-.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.629	.296	.588	.677
<b>SI1</b>	Pearson Correlation	.099	.131	.319**	.228**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.163	.064	.000	.001
<b>OM1</b>	Pearson Correlation	.149*	.220**	.291**	.155*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.002	.000	.027
<b>ES1</b>	Pearson Correlation	.127	.140*	.188**	.159*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	.047	.008	.024
N		202	202	202	202

Table 15 The Correlations between IC subscales and English Language Ability Subscales at T1

Correlations - Time 2					
		R2	W2	S2	L2
<b>CE2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.162*	.086	.130	.265**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.252	.082	.000
<b>FL2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.051	-.008	.062	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.499	.913	.405	.794
<b>SI2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.198**	.188*	.316**	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.011	.000	.001
<b>OM2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.118	.139	.210**	.291**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	.063	.004	.000
<b>ES2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.233**	.118	.244**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.113	.001
	N	181	181	181	181

Table 16 The Correlations between IC subscales and English Language Ability Subscales at T2

Moreover, multiple linear regression analysis using the enter method was performed to investigate the relationship between students' English language ability and the IC subscales. The results showed no significant model;  $F = .202$ ,  $P > .05$ ;  $R^2 = 0.005$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = -.018$ . This means that English language ability in speaking, listening, writing, and reading could predict students' IC subscales (CE, OM, SI, ES and FL) in this study. An example of CE can be seen in Table 16.

English Language Ability								
	Reading		Writing		Listening		Speaking	
	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Mean CE	.011	.130	-.026	-.298	-.076	-.757	.032	.322
Sig.	.937							

Table 17 Regression Analysis of IC and English Language Ability

Based on students' personal experiences, they appeared to have different views on how the host language proficiency affected their IC development during their sojourn. In accordance with the above quantitative result, most of the participants believed that the development of their intercultural communication skills depended on their

English language proficiency, particularly speaking and listening. They thought that English was the key to understand each other and hence the more accurate and precise their English, the better the communication would be. In addition, some interviewees thought that good English skills can make people feel confident in talking with others:

I think it's important because it adds to your confidence in yourself...but still, if you don't have English, how can we communicate, it really plays a big role, a big part of the communication. (Y, international, EEE, T2)

It is important coz we had a lot of misunderstandings, it's not the culture, how they think, it's how we communicate so I had misunderstanding towards other people...so I think knowing English, the English proficiency is very very important. (E, international, EEE, T3)

Some of the interviewees reported that a basic understanding of English was enough to make friends and have a daily conversation. It was not necessary to have a high level of English proficiency, the non-verbal language was also essential and they explained how it was helpful to communicate with one another if the language barrier occurred.

Not very important to have a very high level of English if you know basic English you can communicate with each other, we have a lot of verbal and non-verbal communication... (A, international, Business, T2)

The majority of participants stated that the better the English ability was, the better communication was but that language was not the only factor that contributed to good communication. Being open-minded about otherness in a culturally different environment was seen as another important element in becoming an intercultural competent human being.

In addition, staff interviewees frequently stated international students' language problems and unfamiliarity of the UK educational system, which were seen as the two main challenges that international students faced. Staff perceptions towards domestic and international students' learning abilities focused mainly on their level of English language proficiency, previous work and education experiences, and educational and cultural backgrounds. In the business school, one member of staff noted that it was hard to teach two different cohorts together in one classroom as she thought international cohorts were at a 'child starting point' while the home cohorts were seen as 'a higher level' group. Another staff participant from the Education programme remarked that home students were more confident than their counterparts:

...who are very attuned to the Anglo-Saxon education system, they are very independent, their language skills tend to be better, they may have some real work experience or a lot of we covered in the classroom, they can immediately connect all sorts of things, the experience they've had...they can easily engage in discussion... (S1, female, Business)

...home teachers<sup>45</sup> rather dominating the group because English is their first language and they feel more confident and so on. (S3, male, Education)

Some of the staff specifically raised the issue of how students' English proficiency affected their learning achievement and mentioned language support programmes that were offered as an important tool to assist international students' language studies. Learning was affected by students' language skills when they had limited words to express themselves or need to take valuable exam time to translate and understand the questions:

One cohort feels like struggling, struggling to understand what's been said in terms of the subject language, language more generally, maybe not used to different accents and dialects, to the speed of speech... (S1, female, Business)

I do believe that language could be a barrier to achieve a better result. I've seen it in terms of some students with English skills given them an exam in English and have to write in English, that translation would obviously take valuable exam time whereas local English speaking people would understand straight away... (S4, male, Engineering)

...that does affect their learning coz it could take them a little bit longer and from the point of view of expressing their learning, it's also then potentially limited in terms of their language skills if they find difficult to express what they understood in English rather than in their first language. (S5, female, Engineering)

In fact, this made some of the staff interviewees struggle when they were teaching in class or assessing their students' work since they were unable to take into account that some students' first languages were not English:

...it's almost a little bit like primary teaching where you have to do that to be really clear and explicit and nor assume that people understand you...if you don't do that, then it's much danger and risk that people don't really engage with what you are doing, they don't understand it but they don't tell you they don't understand it... (S2, female, Education)

We need to ensure that every student is treated the same and obviously, that is very unfair given that some students have a child starting point than others...we probably ignore more of the typos and sort of grammatical

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<sup>45</sup> 'teachers' refer to the students in this group.

errors, I probably read something twice or three times trying to understand what the student means...I will probably be harsh with them (native speakers) because I recognise they are a higher level and they can do better... (S1, female, Business)

...is quite difficult to manage is just considering how to evaluate students' work for students who are writing in their second language... (S5, female, Engineering).

### 5.3.4 Gender differences

The quantitative data showed that females scored higher in CE at T1 (M= 3.92, SD= .47) than male counterparts (M= 3.73, SD= .54),  $t(318) = 3.37, p = .001$ . Males, on the other hand, scored higher in ES at T1 (M= 3.11, SD= .70) than females (M= 3.26, SD= .62) and also at T2. But this difference was not significant  $t(318) = -1.89, p = .060$ .

	Sex	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
CE T1	Female (N=178)	3.92	.47	3.370	318	.001*
	Male (N=142)	3.73	.54			
FL T1	Female	2.57	.57	-.440	318	.661
	Male	2.60	.54			
SI T1	Female	3.30	.58	.317	318	.752
	Male	3.28	.54			
OM T1	Female	3.62	.47	1.323	318	.187
	Male	3.55	.49			
ES T1	Female	3.11	.70	-1.887	318	.060
	Male	3.26	.62			

	Sex	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
CE T2	Female (N=56)	3.80	.47	-.726	99	.470
	Male (N=45)	3.87	.43			
FL T2	Female	2.68	.55	-.180	99	.857
	Male	2.70	.51			
SI T2	Female	3.29	.49	-.820	99	.414
	Male	3.38	.55			
OM T2	Female	3.53	.46	-1.398	99	.165
	Male	3.65	.44			
ES T2	Female	3.02	.51	-1.376	99	.172
	Male	3.18	.68			

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 18 IC Subscales Comparison between Female and Male Students

The overall impression from the interview data is that females felt more frustrated and irritated than males when there were adjustment problems over time, particularly in

T2 (four months into studies). Overall it has been difficult to determine this as there is no conclusive way to understand if males are more emotionally stable than females. Female participants were generally more expressive and willing to share openly about their difficulties and challenges. This was not the case for the male participants who were not as enthusiastic to disclose personal information:

I was really stressful and we had four exams in a week...I escaped home for 3 days to Russia. I was missing so much, I want somebody who is close to me... (L, international, Engineering, T2)

In the first three months, I cannot adjust well and I had some mental issues... the first three months was terrible and I am not satisfied with myself... (Q, international, Business, T2)

Both females and males in the interviews showed their empathy and OM towards others who are culturally and linguistically different from them while the survey data demonstrated that females had significantly higher mean scores in CE than males at T1. Although males were more emotionally stable about their difficulties and challenges than female participants during the interviews, the quantitative data did not show any significant differences in ES between female and male participants. In the following sections, students' academic and socio-cultural experiences in the host university are explored.

#### **5.4 Academic Experience and Intercultural Competence**

Sections 5.4 and 5.5 aim to answer the third research question:

- What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development?

In this section, first and foremost, students' academic experiences were explored, which particularly focused on participants' perceptions on two main elements, including curriculum content and modes of assessment (group work was frequently mentioned by participants), followed by their sociocultural experiences such as social activity, social contact and general intercultural adaptation (see Figure 9). Data was analysed and presented chronologically at T1, T2, and T3 in this study in order to track and monitor the academic (5.4) and sociocultural (5.5) factors that potentially impacted students' intercultural competence development. Writing in a chronological

timeline provided a clear and organised way to capture how students' perceptions of their learning experience changed and developed over time.

#### 5.4.1 Quantitative findings - Disciplinary variations on IC development

The quantitative data showed a statistically significant difference between disciplines in CE measurement at T1 as determined by one-way ANOVA  $F(2,337) = 3.917$ ,  $p = .021$ . A Turkey post hoc test revealed that students from the Education school scored significantly higher in CE ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = .47$ ) than students from the Engineering school ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = .56$ ),  $p = .017$ .

	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE T1</b>	Business (N=120)	3.84	.49	337	.021*
	Education (N=113)	3.90	.47		
	Engineering (N=107)	3.72	.56		
<b>FL T1</b>	Business	2.56	.51	337	.456
	Education	2.59	.60		
	Engineering	2.65	.55		
<b>SI T1</b>	Business	3.32	.64	337	.743
	Education	3.29	.51		
	Engineering	3.26	.49		
<b>OM T1</b>	Business	3.59	.48	337	.871
	Education	3.59	.45		
	Engineering	3.56	.51		
<b>ES T1</b>	Business	3.19	.58	337	.067
	Education	3.07	.72		
	Engineering	3.27	.67		

	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE T2</b>	Business (N=102)	3.83	.45	227	.814
	Education (N=85)	3.86	.49		
	Engineering (N=43)	3.81	.78		
<b>FL T2</b>	Business	2.68	.53	227	.602
	Education	2.71	.57		
	Engineering	2.60	.63		
<b>SI T2</b>	Business	3.32	.51	227	.158
	Education	3.18	.49		
	Engineering	3.27	.61		
<b>OM T2</b>	Business	3.59	.45	227	.264
	Education	3.49	.47		
	Engineering	3.48	.41		
<b>ES T2</b>	Business	3.08	.60	227	.232
	Education	2.94	.66		
	Engineering	3.09	.69		

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 19 IC Subscales Comparison among Business, Education and Engineering Disciplines

		Mean Difference	Sig.	95% Confident Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<b>CE1</b>	Education Business	.062	.588	-.091	.222
	Engineering	.189	.017	.028	.350

Table 20 Post hoc on CE1 which Showed Significant Difference between Education and Engineering Schools

Further details about differences of IC in each discipline were compared between T1 and T2 in the table below (see Table 21). A paired-sample t-test was administrated to investigate how IC changed from T1 to T2 in each discipline. As the data presented below shows, in the Business discipline, CE and ES score decreased over time while FL, SI and OM increased from T1 to T2. However, only the difference of FL was significant,  $t(101) = -2.064$ ,  $p = .042$ . In the Engineering discipline, OM decreased significantly.

		M	SD	t	df	Sig.
<b>Business</b>	CE1-CE2	.004	.70	.053	101	.958
	FL1-FL2	-.158	.77	-2.064	101	.042*
	SI1-SI2	-.036	.82	-.440	101	.661
	OM1-OM2	-.005	.71	-.070	101	.944
	ES1-ES2	.076	.86	.896	101	.372
<b>Education</b>	CE1-CE2	.003	.72	.38	84	.970
	FL1-FL2	-.147	.79	-1.725	84	.088
	SI1-SI2	.076	.73	.968	84	.336
	OM1-OM2	.125	.61	1.885	84	.063
	ES1-ES2	.151	.92	1.517	84	.133
<b>Engineering</b>	CE1-CE2	.035	.76	.300	42	.766
	FL1-FL2	.032	.84	.251	42	.803
	SI1-SI2	.038	.72	.343	42	.733
	OM1-OM2	.206	.54	2.506	42	.016*
	ES1-ES2	.233	.90	1.704	42	.096

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 21 The pre- and post- IC test comparison in Three Disciplines

Different from the above result, interview data showed that most of the participants thought they become more open-minded and more empathetic towards other people. However, some students from the Engineering discipline expressed negative feelings towards some of their academic experiences, such as multicultural group work. The



interview findings show that although students reported that they had become more open-minded and culturally empathetic in the interviews, the challenges they experienced over time contributed little to their IC development. Nevertheless, it is crucial to explore their IC from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. More qualitative findings are presented below in this regard.

#### **5.4.2 Qualitative findings - *Students and staff's experiences of the Internationalised Curriculum***

*At the beginning of the programme (T1)*

In the early teaching weeks, although students had not attended any lectures in the host university, international and EU participants particularly showed strong intentions to select international based modules rather than UK based ones. Interestingly, regardless of the programme in which participants were studying, they showed an interest in having an international dimension in their learning:

I really hope that the focus of the materials of the course emphasis is not about like for example, doing renew energy but it's gonna like worldwide renew energy not being a focus on the UK. (I, international, EEE, T1)

Similarly, those who chose to study internationally related programmes, such as international marketing or cross-cultural communication, they believed that learning from an international perspective can benefit their studies in many ways:

That's why I chose this specific course of international marketing coz we got people from all around the world in our degree course as well. So you can meet people from EU, from Asia, America as well. (R, EU, Business, T1)

Additionally, nearly all international students expressed their positive expectations of developing IC through their studies. They believed that the more cross-cultural interactions they had during their degrees, the more confident they would become in the future and this would benefit their future career.

I think IC is very important. If I can experience more now, I will become more confident in the future when I meet people from different cultures and our conversation can be more efficient. (A, international, TESOL, T1)

Definitely, that's why I am here. Developing IC is one of my major objectives. (R, EU, Business, T1)

On the other hand, home students held a slightly different view and they felt that a master's degree is an individual endeavour and they did not expect that they would develop IC in less than a year.

Probably a little bit, I mean mater is mostly an individual work. (D, home, EEE, T1)

It can be seen that most participants expected to have an internationalised curriculum that involves an international context, rather than learning a UK-based content. Few disciplinary differences were found at this point. However, since the first-round interview took place in the early teaching weeks, students did not yet provide much information on their experiences of the curriculum they were learning. In terms of students' expectations of developing IC as one of their learning outcomes, most international students acknowledged the importance of IC while home students had a slightly different perspective. The result could also be explained by their different learning motivations, which have been illustrated in 5.3.2.

#### *Four months into the programme (T2)*

After four months of studies, student participants from the Engineering school commented that although their lecturers did not emphasise much about the international or intercultural elements in their teaching, an international element was delivered through pre- and post- school work or group discussion which allowed them to prepare their individual case study based on the knowledge they have about their contexts. In this way even though the content may be originally UK based, students were asked to apply it to a different context:

The lecturers I feel haven't really done much about it. I think the content they've taught definitely has, they leave all the post and pre-school work so open-ended like the last one is it says choose your own country... (S, home, EEE, T2)

We have some based on the UK but most of the things and examples we tried to end up doing or talking about are all international, from China to EU to South America to Africa, it's very open. (I, international, EEE, T2)

Business, by nature, can be very international as many businesses operate globally in today's era. Since most of the participants from the Business school were studying internationally related programmes in this study, they pointed out that most of their learning content had an international and intercultural aspect, which was seen as the

core value of the course. They also mentioned the important role that their lecturers play in promoting IC in the class by enlarging the scope of knowledge or mixing students with different cultures in group discussions.

It's all international marketing so everything is international. So it's all about multinational cooperation, globalisation, and global companies so the whole thing is about international trade... The lecturers, they really try to ensure that we mix with cultures (M, home, Business, T2)

Because my course is international business management so we are not studying one country, we are constantly studying many countries, developing countries, and businesses and cross-cultural settings, business people who travel constantly they have to meet people from different countries so it's quite international. (A, international, Business, T2)

We have many international perspectives. Sometimes our lecturers will play some Youtube videos to introduce case studies in different countries, such as America, UK, Japan, etc. (Q, international, Business, T2)

However, students had divergent views in the Education school. In the Education school, students who study TESOL claimed that there was no international or intercultural element in their learning but it was understandable due to the nature of this programme - teaching English to speakers of other languages, which can be the same worldwide. Most of them said the international and intercultural element was not very important in their field of study.

I wouldn't say it's the main of my program, my program is more about teaching linguistics or language stuff...I would say it's the same. (P, international, TESOL, T2)

Students from other programmes in Education that related to international perspective reported the international element in their curriculum:

Our tutor requires us to read teaching policy in different countries because different cultures and historical backgrounds lead to the development of the teaching policy at some point. (L, international, Education, T2)

Most students from the Engineering programmes felt that their IC had not developed in class after four months of study and their lecturers did not seem to encourage it most of the time. An Engineering student reported that he even had less intercultural interaction than before since there were more opportunities to interact with others when working in an international company than in the university:

Not really encouraged...not in class, we are just getting to know other students. It's not really developed. (E, international, EEE, T2)

I probably have less cross-cultural communication skills now than I did when I was working. When I was working, my team was 50% so that eight person, four of them were EU nationals so I talked to them all day every day. (D, home, EEE, T2)

Whereas most students from Business and Education schools reported that they had developed IC to a certain degree by interacting with other students in class.

To some extent, yes, I've learned the way how to communicate with other students. I have my way to do things, and they have their way to do things, we are different, but now I start to accept the differences. I think it will also help me with my social skills. (L, international, EDU, T2)

Apart from different language we speak, there's no differences. So I am really happy, I really like all the different students and I quite enjoy learning their opinions and sat down have a conversation about Chinese culture and it was really interesting. (M, home, Business, T2)

For those who believed their IC had developed throughout the year, most of them reported more social aspect benefits than academic aspect. According to students' responses, although the curriculum did help students to work with different people and understand each other more, comparatively participants believed that attending social activities<sup>46</sup> brought more value in developing their IC than in class activities:

Not in class because most of my social life is out of the class with other people either my flatmates or the people from salsa society so it's not really with my classmates. (E, international, EEE, T2)

Although some of the students downplayed the academic factor in the development of IC, it did broaden their horizons on how the subject knowledge can be applied in other countries and contexts. Also through group tasks and working in mixed groups, students often reported that they become more open-minded and tolerant to other people who had different viewpoints and personalities.

In general, both home and international students from the Education and Business disciplines claimed that they had become more open-minded than four months previously.

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<sup>46</sup> This was unpacked further in 5.5.2

I think I am more open-minded, more thoughtful and critical... (P, international, TESOL, T2)

You really need to be understanding and open-minded and tolerant and try to always put yourself in some else's shoes. (R, EU, Business, T2)

I become more open-minded... (M, home, Business, T2)

After studying for four months, most of the students from Business and Education disciplines felt their curriculum was internationalised involving many international and intercultural elements. Students indicated that their lecturers made efforts to develop their IC by making them aware of different concepts in a broader context and emphasising the importance of sharing different viewpoints with each other and encouraging interactions among students from different cultural backgrounds. However, students from the Engineering school reported less positive experiences with the internationalised curriculum and most of them reported that their lecturers did not encourage their IC development in class.

#### *Nine months into the programme (T3)*

At the end of the taught-element, when students were asked if they thought the curriculum is internationalised or not, participants from the Business and Education disciplines reported positively about the international and intercultural elements in their learning, whereas students from the Engineering discipline appeared to be less positive. The former reported that the lecturers tried to get people from different countries involved and encouraged them to share their viewpoints, while the latter believed that some of their lecturers did not make much effort in encouraging IC in the class. The result is similar to T2.

Lecturer is very much insist on people from different countries to get involved, to participate, and to share their views. (B, EU, Business, T3)

It's all international, isn't it? We learn teaching English as second language as second language and we refer to different countries for different students, and I think there will be different teaching approaches. (P, international, TESOL, T3)

The lecturers, some of them will make the effort, some of them don't. some of they speak very strong British accents, use a lot colloquial words. It's gonna be difficult for international students to understand... in the lecture, it's not much interactions between students. (D, home, EEE, T3)

IC has not been encouraged at all in my class. (Y, international, EEE, T3)

It is noteworthy that most students felt that academic experience in class helped little with their IC development, while social aspects contributed largely to IC. On the other hand, others felt that the combination of in-class and out-of-class strategies was the most efficient way to develop IC.

I don't think the lecture stuff do much to help people's IC, it's definitely social. (S, home, EEE, T3)

It would be like 90% out of class and 10% in class. (I, international, EEE, T3)

IC is developed mostly from attending extra-curriculum activities that I have the chance to communicate with people, but still studying and communicating with my course mates make a great deal of it. (Y, international, EEE, T3)

Both ways, in the class, I have classmates from different countries, outside in my accommodation, I have friends from different countries so I think both way has improved and developed. (E, international, EEE, T3)

From staff's perspective, some academic staff in the Engineering programme expressed a similar viewpoint, saying that the curriculum content itself did not contain many international aspects but what students prepare for case studies and group discussion did have international and intercultural elements in it:

There's nothing specific where we ask students to bring something that's about their home countries but there are opportunities to do that so we have case studies where students can choose a case study and sometimes they choose from their home country coz it's easy for them to get materials in their first language... (S5, female, EEE)

This suggested that although the curriculum content was not very international in the engineering school, staff participants were aware of the importance of the rich resources that international students brought to the class. Some staff in the Engineering school said that they faced challenges when trying to update their academic knowledge. This occurred when they tried to learn more about the UK standards and elsewhere in the world, in order to understand and teach students from diverse cultural backgrounds:

The main challenge for me is to keeping my own knowledge up to date so if you try to teach something and put it in the context of another country and sometimes it can be different countries in different years then I wouldn't necessarily know what the renewable energy situation is in

Paraguay or Uganda wherever that student might come from... (S5, English, EEE)

In addition, Education staff interviewees also indicated that the presence of a large number of international students made them think about the ways that they teach and how to adjust their teaching methods to make their teaching linguistically and culturally more accessible to everyone:

...I am so aware of the rich experiences students bring and how much we can all learning from discussing...I guess I am still learning and do things differently every year but I've learned to try and speak in a way that is accessible to everybody...I try to be very respectful to all the cultures in the room... (S2, female, Education)

You have to work at it, it doesn't just happen so each year I think I try to do a little more to make this work because sometimes you can feel you don't want to push people too hard to make them feel uncomfortable...and it's a mistake to regard any group as a homogeneous group, and everybody is an individual... (S3, male, Education)

It seems that both students and staff participants in the three disciplines recognised the importance of having international and intercultural elements in an internationalised curriculum, mostly in the form of having international case studies. They also acknowledged the importance of developing IC. At this stage, similar to T2, students from Business and Education schools generally felt their curriculum was internationalised and they had developed their IC to a certain extent. However, students from the Engineering school held the belief that their lecturers could do better to internationalise the curricula, for example, more interactions with students, and the use of less colloquial words. The qualitative findings are largely in line with the quantitative results, suggesting that international Engineering students' OM showed a significant drop after nine months. The results put forward a need for staff involvement in developing students' IC in the class, especially in the Engineering school. As one important emerging theme, group work in the development of IC is analysed in the following section.

#### **5.4.3 Qualitative findings - Multicultural group work and IC development**

One of the strongest emerging themes in this study was 'group work'. This section illustrated students and staff accounts on group work. Based on the data, the mode of assessment can be implemented very differently in different disciplines. Generally

speaking, the examination was an essential assessment to evaluate students' performance in the Engineering school, while the Business school employed a mix of essay and exam evaluations. In the Education school, assessment was largely essay-based, with evaluation of group presentations and tasks. Furthermore, as student participants pointed out the group work assessment was of high stake in both Business and Engineering schools while non-assessed, more informal group discussions normally took place in the Education school.

Staff reported a tendency for students to self-select along monocultural lines if they were granted that freedom:

They will tend to sit in a national group or comfort groups so the UK students tended to sit together, talk together, the Chinese students tended to form a table... (S3, male, Education)

I think it's quite natural that people are drawn to sit with the people that they are much comfortable with... (S2, female, Education)

Therefore, in order to let students mingle more and learn from other perspectives in class, staff spoke of their strategies of mixing students together based on different cultural backgrounds, experiences, and sometimes gender, for group work. Staff interviewees believed that group work could benefit both home and international students by bringing different viewpoints and perspectives into a group discussion. It could also let students understand each other more to prepare them for the future international work environment:

...if you talk to a Chinese student and you are a UK teacher, there is a different viewpoint possibly become established in your head, if you are a Chinese student and you talk to a Saudi student, there is a possibility another viewpoint can be developed...so for me intercultural competence comes from getting voices established in your head in a healthy way that come from other places, other cultures, so you don't just have a monocultural view. (S3, male, Education)

...students get a better understanding that not everyone is exactly like them and how they might use the natural preferences with some of their peer's work in a group work...giving them some tools to think differently about their experiences rather than dismissing group work as hard difficult...I think that is something I am trying to get across to people, it is hard but in a sense, it's almost safe environment... (S1, female, Business)

Although the idea of group work was controversial, staff and students, in general, recognised the value of multicultural group work in developing IC. One of the staff participants from Education believed that although students may find group



discussion challenging, they managed to overcome difficulties in the long run with open-mindedness:

...it is really difficult to be given feedback from somebody who they regard as a weak student...I think it was a really productive experience but for some people it was horrible, for many more it was good and for small, the minority was wonderful...I think sometimes people just struggle with that a little bit but I think generally open-mindedness wins over and we make progress. (S3, male, Education)

After exploring staff perceptions of group work in IC development, it is worth to explore from students' perspectives on this issue. In the following paragraphs, students' experiences of group work are demonstrated in T1, T2 and T3 order.

#### *At the beginning of the programme (T1)*

At an early stage, although participants had not yet undertaken any assessment in their programmes, some of the home students from the Engineering school already expressed their concerns over international students' different levels of English that may bring negative effects to group projects. Although students acknowledged that international students are an added value to their course, they worried that working with international students may cause language and communication barriers that may affect their final results of assignments. Students were asked 'if you prefer to work with people from your own country or people from other cultural backgrounds?' and a home participant responded language barrier is considered first if that specific assessed task required communication and language skills. Since it was the first week of their academic year, most of them had little experience in study related activities:

...it pretty depends on the task I would say and if communication levels and anything raises significant language barrier or not. (D, home, EEE, T1)

On the other hand, international students reported rather positively on working in a culturally mixed group with people from all over the world.

When we mix the people, we learn about the other culture, the other habits, so even about eating habits, about study habits, about many things. How to communicate with them. What is polite and what is impolite in different cultures. (A, international, Business, T1)

I think by then I would know how people from each country work based on their perspectives and their cultures... so I think that would benefit me for

the future... it would benefit me for having basic ideas about each different person. (F, international, Education, T1)

Staff from the Business school echoed that home students, in fact, were not very willing to work in a multicultural group and they complained about it because they thought it may affect their final marks if they worked with a 'weak' student.

I don't think the majority of them are open enough to the opportunities and take the risk that to put themselves into that engagement with others, realising actually not get as good mark as you might get working on your own because there's so much this focus on...I need to get the certificate at the end because I am belittling the situation here. I know that a lot of students have gone into debt... (S1, female, Business)

At T1, most international students valued the opportunities to work with people from different cultural backgrounds, while some home students mentioned that they tended to have a second thought on working with international students in group projects due to language barriers.

#### *Four months into the programme (T2)*

After four months of their studies, participants from the Engineering and Business schools expressed a mixed feeling of working with people who come from diverse cultural backgrounds in group tasks. International participants with a decent English ability or native speakers tended to describe their learning as the most 'challenging' and 'frustrating' experience largely due to the language barriers and cultural differences. For example, some participants reported that some students from a certain culture can be very shy and not expressive in the group discussion. They believed that it was also 'rewarding' and 'enjoyable' since it gave them opportunities to learn different cultural behaviours and different ways of thinking. Participants tended to suffer many difficulties and struggles and have negative feelings about working in mixed groups in the first semester. However, this situation gradually became better after a few months.

It's great to be able to confront so many different cultures, to have insights into different ways of thinking really, this can be a challenge sometimes just misunderstanding, confusions... (R, EU, Business, T2)

Working in groups with different nationalities is pretty difficult but again it's very frustrating but also very rewarding. So language barriers, cultural differences, it's really good. I've learned how to communicate with different cultures. (M, home, Business, T2)

...during the teamwork, it was like a nightmare because we don't speak the same language, everyone should speak English so we had to focus on the work and we had to explain what's going on and translate. So it was very very exhausting and frustrating...but now it's better. (E, international, EEE, T2)

In the Education school, group work was not a common way to assess students, which required students to work together after class on some projects. Students from Education reported that they had limited opportunities to meet or work with other students after class and the only opportunity was group discussion which happened in class.

I didn't have any group work... I just had some interactions when we work in a group in lectures. (P, international, TESOL, T2)

I don't have any group work semester one. (F, international, CCC, T2)

In the first semester, students from the Business and Engineering schools perceived multicultural group work as challenging and frustrating due to language barriers, misunderstandings, and cultural differences. Meanwhile, they also believed that working in a culturally mixed group brings many benefits. However, their expression was more on the negative side of culturally mixed group work at this stage.

### *Nine months into the programme (T3)*

During the last round of interviews, some students reported that group work or group discussion was the only real opportunity for students to work in a multicultural environment and to develop their IC even though they may not enjoy the process:

I guess the group project is the only real way that happened (D, home, Engineering, T3).

Our module leader separated us into multicultural group to have group discussion...I don't like it but it was very necessary to develop IC. (Q, international, Business, T3)

A home student participant expressed his disappointment and frustration about doing extra work for those whose first language was not English, such as correcting their grammar, rewriting sentences, and re-referencing. He reported that students' different levels made group tasks even more difficult.

It's quite difficult sometimes, I found a lot of corrections work so every project spent quite a few hours rewriting, rewording, re-referencing that goes to home students as well. As I said I don't like a group project in university, the problem is everyone is not at the same level. (D, home, EEE, T3)

On the other hand, some international participants from the Engineering school reported that they felt ignored and excluded by local students in group discussions or group work, which was upsetting and challenging.

...sometimes very challenging though, like British students they used to ignore us internationals coz somehow not all of them but I can say some of them, most of them think we are dumb, so sometimes they didn't even give us the chance to express our opinions and ideas. (E, international, EEE, T3)

Different from the previous interview, student participants mentioned that things that make group work difficult, not only the linguistic and cultural differences among students but most importantly also logistical and management issues. For example, the problem of getting all group members together for a meeting was mentioned:

That wasn't much problem coz we sort of agree in the group that the English speakers, native speakers will check all the work and make sure it was fine but it was getting all together, try to get everyone on the same place was difficult, so that's the hardest part of it (S, home, EEE, T3).

Some participants continued to regard group work as both challenging and rewarding, but, different to the previous interview, they no longer regarded language as the main barrier that caused their frustration when doing group projects. Instead, students with decent English proficiency showed more empathy to those who struggled with English. They believed that working in such a diverse and multicultural environment helped them to feel for others.

I have to say in the first semester, I tended to get frustrated by different things you know these cultural differences and our conversation. I think in this second semester, I was more empathetic, more understanding... you just need to accept certain things and go with it (R, international, Business, T3).

They also revealed that they had gradually changed themselves due to working with people from other backgrounds. One international participant said that this learning experience made her become a better listener and team player. As a consequence, she has become a more patient and less self-centred person. There was one home

student who expressed that he has changed from a confronted and aggressive person to a less dominant, patient, understanding and open-minded person:

During my academic life, group work, I think I improve myself in a way that I am a better listener now, at least I listen to people's ideas, I am a better group member coz I had, even now I have this kind of self-expressive, conventional, independent that I think I know the best, I don't care who else what they say... (E, international, EEE, T3)

I become more open-minded, I become consciously a lot less dominant... I step back and I think it works better to be softer than harder so I've learned that I need to be more understanding and more patient. (M, home, Business, T3)

Generally speaking, both students and academic staff from all three disciplines acknowledged the importance of mixed culture group work in IC development. During the first round of interviews, most of the students expected to work with people from different cultural backgrounds and they believed that this gave them an opportunity to expose themselves to different views and perspectives. Four months into the programme (in the first semester), although they recognised the benefits of group work, students showed their frustration for having communication misunderstandings, language barriers and cultural differences. During the last round of interviews (in the second semester), it is noteworthy that international and home students experienced different challenges in the group work. The former often felt excluded from group discussion because their ideas were seemingly not valued by their home counterparts and the English language was seen as an issue that caused problems. The latter remained concerned about the language barriers, cultural differences and different learning levels that may add to their workload. For example, they reported that they need to spend extra hours to check international students' reports and sometimes to rewrite them. At this stage, despite some similar difficulties that they had encountered in the first semester (i.e. language barriers), several students stressed that management issues and work ethics could be the main problems making group work difficult. Different to the first two rounds of interviews, students reported more positive learning outcomes of group work, for example, it helped them become more patient, understanding, empathetic, and open-minded. The qualitative results could partially explain why there was a drop in Engineering students' OM after nine months and it could contribute to their negative experiences in multicultural group work. Although most students felt they had become more empathetic and open-minded, the quantitative data showed the opposite result.

## **5.5 Socio-cultural Experiences and Intercultural Competence**

As students started their new life abroad, they were exposed to many new cultural experiences when they arrived in the host country. These ranged from a random conversation with a taxi driver from the airport; asking for directions when they got lost; observed diversities among people on campus or on the street. Not only international sojourners but also home students studying in an internationalised learning environment experienced something new. In this section, students' intercultural experiences are explored from a socio-cultural perspective. In addition to students' academic experiences, socio-cultural experience also plays an important role in the development of their IC during their sojourn. Drawing from preliminary knowledge, students' choice of social activities to some extent was affected by their cultural differences due to different cultural values and interests, for example, it is believed that UK drinking culture is not accepted by some international students who come from a culture where drinking is not allowed for religious reasons. Therefore, in this section, findings regarding students' perceptions of their social contacts and experience of social activities are presented. Regarding students' cultural experiences, adaptation difficulties were explored in relation to their intercultural adaptation. Based on the conceptual framework of this study (see Figure 9), this section is structured as follows: home and international students' perceptions of their participations in social activities (see 5.5.2) and their social contacts (see 5.5.3) have been presented chronically. Challenges and difficulties in intercultural adaptation have been analysed over time in 5.5.4.

### **5.5.1 Quantitative findings – Home and international students' IC development**

Home students scored significantly higher in SI at T1 ( $M= 3.44$ ,  $SD$ ) than international students ( $M= 3.44$ ,  $SD= .69$ ),  $t(319) = 2.17$ ,  $p= .031$  and they also scored significantly higher in SI at T2 ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD= .68$ ) than international students ( $M= 3.20$ ,  $SD= .47$ ),  $t(225) = 5.13$ ,  $p= .000$ . In addition to SI, the differences between home and international students in the other four subscales including CE, FL, OM, and ES were not significantly different at T1. However, home students' OM was significantly higher ( $M= 3.73$ ,  $SD= .41$ ) than international students at T2 ( $M= 3.50$ ,  $SD= .45$ ),  $t(225) = 2.44$ ,  $p= .016$ . No other subscale showed any significant difference at T2.

	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE T1</b>	Home (N=53)	3.89	0.57			
	International (N=268)	3.82	0.51	0.991	319	0.322
<b>FL T1</b>	Home	2.66	0.66			
	International	2.57	0.52	0.988	319	0.324
<b>SI T1</b>	Home	3.44	0.69			
	International	3.26	0.52	2.168	319	.031*
<b>OM T1</b>	Home	3.50	0.44			
	International	3.60	0.49	-1.376	319	0.170
<b>ES T1</b>	Home	3.26	0.69			
	International	3.16	0.67	1.003	319	0.317

	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>CE T2</b>	Home (N=27)	3.96	0.44			
	International (N=200)	3.83	0.47	1.416	225	0.158
<b>FL T2</b>	Home	2.64	0.52			
	International	2.68	0.57	-0.320	225	0.749
<b>SI T2</b>	Home	3.73	0.68			
	International	3.20	0.47	5.132	225	.000*
<b>OM T2</b>	Home	3.73	0.41			
	International	3.50	0.45	2.438	225	.016*
<b>ES T2</b>	Home	3.16	0.67			
	International	3.02	0.64	1.115	225	0.266

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 22 IC Subscales Comparison between Home and International Students

Regarding IC development over time, international students showed higher scores in CE, SI, OM, and ES at T2 than at T1 but showed a lower score in FL at T2 (see Table 23). Although there was a slightly increase in Mean score for CE at T2, it was no significant difference between T1 and T2 ( $M = .005$ ,  $SD = .596$ ),  $t(200) = .121$ ,  $p = .903$ . As for the OM, international students reported a significantly higher score at T2 than T1 ( $M = .099$ ,  $SD = .643$ ),  $t(200) = 2.154$ ,  $p = .032$ . Only for the FL, international had a lower result at T2 than T1 ( $M = -.109$ ,  $SD = .770$ ),  $t(200) = -1.977$ ,  $p = .049$ . While home students showed a higher score for CE at T2 but it was no significant difference. There were decreases in FL, SI, OM, and ES from T1 to T2 but there was no significant difference (see Table 24).

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Interval of the				
					Lower	Upper			
INT	CE1-CE2	.005	.596	.043	-.079	.089	.121	194	.903
INT	FL1-FL2	-.109	.770	.055	-.218	.000	-1.977	194	.049*
INT	SI1-SI2	.059	.713	.050	-.041	.158	1.167	199	.245
INT	OM1-OM2	.099	.643	.046	.008	.189	2.154	196	.032*
INT	ES1-ES2	.113	.815	.059	-.003	.229	1.925	191	.056

\*significant at the 95% level

Table 23 International Students' IC Development in Each MPQ Subscale

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Interval of the				
					Lower	Upper			
Home	CE1 - CE2	.088	.777	.150	-.218	.395	.592	26	.559
Home	FL1 - FL2	-.037	.815	.157	-.359	.285	-.236	26	.815
Home	SI1 - SI2	-.137	1.178	.227	-.603	.329	-.604	26	.551
Home	OM1 - OM2	-.139	.690	.133	-.412	.135	-1.043	26	.307
Home	ES1 - ES2	-.045	.979	.188	-.433	.342	-.24	26	.812

Table 24 Home Students' IC Development in Each MPQ Subscale

### 5.5.2 Qualitative findings - Social activity

The following three sections on social activity (5.5.2), social contact (5.5.3) and challenges in intercultural adaptation (5.5.4) contribute to the possible explanations on why home students had significantly higher mean scores on SI than international students.

#### *At the beginning of the programme (T1)*

What students expected to achieve during their studies appeared to be largely influenced by their initial motivations to study in the host university, which was manifested differently among four student cohorts: young home students, mature home students, international students and EU students. Participants were asked 'what do you expect to gain from this one year experience?' Young home students pointed out the specific career aspiration of getting a Master Degree and reported their aim to achieve an academic qualification and then applying for jobs in the UK. Besides the academic endeavour, few social and cultural expectations were mentioned:



Hopefully renewal energy, that's what I want really...now I am just getting for a year of hard work and I am done with the education. (S, home, EEE, T1)

I want to be an engineer. (D, home, EEE, T1)

Whereas, mature home students, international and EU students had much broader and mixed expectations. Although they all emphasised the importance of academic achievement, social and cultural expectations were also emphasised, for example, meeting other people and encountering different perspectives in order to be more open-minded or, as most international and EU students reported, getting to know more about the local culture and customs:

...I really want to learn so to get basics of marketing...it's quite nice to be social with younger people again and different nationalities so I want to gain a lot of that makes me feel younger to be with younger people. (M, home, Business, T1)

I hope I will gain some insights into the basic notions of studying marketing...I expect to meet lots and lots people which will broaden my horizon, to encounter different point of view, different perspectives. (R, EU, Business, T1)

Students' learning motives and expectations to some extent determined their preferences to attend social activities. Differences have been observed among different student cohorts. It is worth noting that international students' social and cultural expectations were generally interrelated to each other but in terms of home students' social expectations, it was a way to relax and enjoy themselves within their comfort zone, which was not normally associated with any cultural learning experience. Specifically, young home students hoped to enjoy the time by doing outdoor activities or sports on their own while international students showed their interests in joining university societies, group activities or travelling in order to make new friends and encountering different cultures:

I do a lot of outdoor activities so a lot of good places to go near here to do that, climbing and cycling...swimming and exploring pretty places. (D, home, EEE, T1)

Just do my studies and then probably play a little sport, that's pretty much about it really, nothing overly exciting. (S, home, EEE, T1)

Most of the EU and international interviewees had prior overseas experience but only a few of them had lived or studied in a foreign country for over six months and most

of them had been abroad only for travelling or business purposes and for a few days or weeks at most. International and EU participants who had experienced visiting other foreign countries before were more aware of the cultural implications of interacting with people from different cultures than those without any prior overseas experience. The participants showed their desire for more opportunities to meet people from different cultures through travel or joining societies:

I want to try societies and interact with people more...it's about joining societies and travelling. (P, international, TESOL, T1)

I am quite a social person. I expect to make new friends and new contacts. (E, international, EEE, T1)

Even though students may have different motivations and opinions on attending social activities, it was evident that they were willing to attend social activities at the beginning of their studies. Some of the participants have already shown their initiatives to actively take part in different kinds of social activities. While most of them reported that they did not have many chances and time to meet other people at this early stage. In a nutshell, international participants in general expected to step out more to experience life in the host country through social activities:

It's because I just arrived, I need to go to the shopping mall to buy grocery, etc. and I don't have much time after that. (O, international, TESOL, T1)

I want to try the society and interact with people more. (P, international, TESOL, T1)

It can be seen that young home students and the rest of the participants had distinct opinions in taking part in social activities. Young home students in general, were less interested in intercultural activities and less likely to associate social activities with cultural learning whereas mature home students, international and EU students were more excited about interacting with culturally different people on different occasions. However, at this early stage, some students expressed that they hardly had the chance to know and interact with others.

#### *Four months into the programme (T2)*

Despite their initial interest in joining social activities, some international students expressed that they would prefer to stay at home to relax due to study pressure and less likely to initiate any social activity whereas others actively attended different

social occasions and make friends. It can be seen that social initiative is a personal thing and it has little to do with one's prior overseas experiences.

I wanted to go out, I should've gone out but I didn't, instead, I stay in my room watching videos or something kind of releasing stress. (P, international, TESOL, T2)

Only when my friends think of some activities and then I will join them, otherwise I would stay at home. (Q, international, Business, T2)

So basically that society because some of us, you know, there are some students, we became friends and through them I know the people from like salsa party, I know the people outside so now I got a lot of friends than international. (E, international, EEE, T2)

I attend more social activities here than in my home country. It seems that I organise all the activities here and I don't know, maybe I am bored and always ask people to go out. (O, international, TESOL, T2)

However, those who spent so much time in attending different social activities pointed out that social activities affected their studies and it should be reduced in the next semester:

I wanted to be more productive but it was productive in a different way, I met lots of people, I may be brought up my English level and I did lots of different interesting stuff but I didn't study enough so exams were just awful. (Y, international, EEE, T2)

Regarding home students' experiences in participating social activities, it seems that they preferred to spend time with their old friends in their previous established social circle and there was one mature student said he needs to work in his spare time. Whereas few believed that spending time with international students was fun.

My girlfriend is in Leeds so I usually see her and we often go climbing... I don't really hang out with my course mates because they are younger than me and a lot of them from local so they want to go out with their friends and I don't see each other very much. (D, home, EEE, T2)

I generally work on the weekend, go down to London, I still have business in London so I still have to. (M, home, Business, T2)

Everyone is from such different countries and obviously not many people from Indonesia, they are a small size in the university so we just think we'd better to get everyone involved coz we are here for a year so make our connections and friends the most we can. So definitely become more social with different nationalities. (S, home, EEE, T2)

Within different student cohorts, differences were found. For example, some international students preferred to be on their own to relax while others tended to join different societies. On the other hand, some home students preferred to stay with their existing networking while others saw the benefits of connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds. It means that social initiatives have little to do with one's prior overseas experiences, but it has much to do with one's social interest. In general, international students were more enthusiastic about joining different university social activities to meet new people than home students since home students have already had their life and social circle. However, some international students also mentioned that attending social activities could take up their time and potentially impact their studies.

#### *Nine months into the programme (T3)*

Some students expressed that social activities distracted them from their study so in the second semester, they tended to do fewer activities in order to be more focused on their study. Although some students felt that social activities could help them with IC development, they had to do it less to be able to concentrate on their study.

I don't remember what I have done this semester for activities, it was really boring but I concentrate on my study, I was frightened that I got to fail two exams and I understood I have to change something so I decided that I have to spend more time studying. (Y, international, EEE, T3)

I was hesitate to join my friends for activities because I felt quite stressful with my assignments. (P, international, TESOL, T3)

Few home students who did not express their strong intention of spending time and socialising with other international course mates in the first interview, they reported that they did enjoy spending time with international students, especially those who can share similar interest with them, for example, playing football, drinking, having meals and doing different things together, while others said that they spent more time with their family and friends from their previous social circle:

I spent time with South American people, it seems a lot of shared things, going to pub, watch same sports. (S, home, EEE, T3)

I ususally spent ime with girlfriend and some friends.. most people in my course are local so they have their home friends aready so I only see them at university, I don't meet them outside the university. (D, home, EEE, T3)

Even at the early stage of the programme, participants showed their different interests and preferences in taking part in social activities. Generally speaking, young home students tended to do individual outdoor activities, sports or part-time jobs in their spare time while international and EU students tended to join university social activities to get to know more people and experience the local culture in their limited time in the host country. This was the fundamental difference between home and international students in terms of their attitudes and their choices for their social lives at the beginning. Similar to the results at T2, SI is associated with individual's social interest. Since home students tended to have their well-established life and social circle in their home country, they could be more active and confident in social occasions than international students. Although international students were more excited about stepping out to make new contacts at the beginning, they seemed to express that study pressure was in the way at the second and third rounds of interviews. The results showed that students' study experiences can somehow limit their sociocultural experiences.

### **5.5.3 Qualitative findings - Social contact**

#### *At the beginning of the programme (T1)*

At the beginning of the academic year, most of the participants reported that they had no difficulty in making friends. They believed that they had already made many friends in the first few weeks generally through taking part in societies, attending international week, meeting students from the same course or from the same house/flat. Most friendships were formed with course mates or flatmates (housemates), people from societies or through an extended friendship network (friend's friends):

I made lots of friends. I have been here for two weeks and the first is my flatmates and then are my group mates... (Y, international, EEE, T1)

It's quite easy actually...this is how it started coz she obviously met some other Erasmus students so we were going out together and it's all about networking. (R, EU, Business, T1)

A few international and mature home students, however reported difficulties in making friends with others as there were not many opportunities to socialise in the first few weeks. They were busy with buying groceries, settling down or processing all the information given by the university, such as registration, blackboard, or emails:

I actually feel a bit painful and struggled to make friends. (O, international, TESOL, T1)

...it has been a challenge to get to know students in the first two weeks coz there is so much information given to you... (B, home, CCC, T1)

For those who came from the local area, they expressed that since their friendship network was already well established, it seemed less necessary for them to make new friends:

...on course is quite a few, but then I've already had a lot of friends here coz this is where I am from so I don't make as many as I should have. (S, home, EEE, T1)

At this early stage, some students had already made different contacts in class and out of class, while others expressed difficulties to know others taking into account that there were only two weeks into their studies. Compared to international students, home students pointed out that since they have already had many friends around locally, there was not necessary for them to make many other new friends during the year.

#### *Four months into the programme (T2)*

After four months, international participants, in general, felt disappointed at not making as many British friends as they expected. They were not very satisfied with the interactions they had with others so far. That was partly because their attitudes gradually changed from making diverse friends to a more study - focused lifestyle due to the inevitably increased workload and exam pressure. They reported that they had been too busy with their studies and assignments over the past few months and therefore there was not enough time to get to know other people and socialise with them, but they also had expectations of meeting more people in the second semester and aimed to achieve a balance between study and social life:

I try to keep busy throughout the year as well so I do work a lot even during the weekends, there's not much spare time there for me. But if I do have it, I really try to make most of it, and that I try to meet people, hang out with them, or travel, that is my New Year resolution... (R, EU, Business, T2)

Most international participants reported that British people were harder to approach than other international students.

To make British friends, honestly, I don't find them are very approachable than Asian...maybe we have similar cultures and backgrounds (A, international, Business, T2)

Local people tend to stay away from us but apart from them, others from German, Finland, Greece, and Korea are very approachable... (Q, international, Business, T2)

It's so weird that I feel like I don't have many British friends... (F, international, CCC, T2)

This issue was not excluded to international students, for those who came from other parts of the UK, they also found difficulties in meeting and socialising with people on their course. They said that most of their course mates were local and they got their own friends, so it was difficult to get into their social circle. In addition, they also needed to travel to other cities to visit family and friend in their spare time, so they did not plan to make many new friends for this one year:

It's quite hard because a lot of the native speakers on my course they are local to here... they've already got friends but other than that my girlfriend lives in Leeds so I have to spend time there... (D, home, EEE, T2)

Sometimes participants pointed out the local drinking culture, most of the time prevented them from socialising with local students. Some of the home students also stated that they intended to socialise more with students from 'drinking cultural backgrounds' but they did realise that people from some countries do not drink. So participants were becoming more aware of each other's habits and cultures after four months:

I don't drink, so sometimes they offer me to the pub when they are free so usually, they go to the bars but me and my friends we just prefer to eat, we enjoy eating different types of food...so there are different interests I feel. (A, international, Business, T2)

The English ones, Uruguay and Chinese, they are probably the main ones, I don't know that coz they are ones who came from drinking cultures...Definitely choosing what we do as a group coz... we just realised there are a few countries and cultures didn't drink so we look at other things, I tried to book bowling, go to things that don't involve just alcohol.. (S, home, EEE, T2)

Some international participants, especially those whose course mates were largely from one country, mentioned that living in the student halls provided opportunities to socialise more with other people with different cultural backgrounds:

My kitchen is quite multicultural, more multicultural than my classroom. It's good living here in a multicultural environment... (P, international, TESOL, T2)

While others stated that their friends were mostly from their course, course mates' diversity gave them a chance to get to know each other's cultures more:

We have done so many things, we celebrated Chinese New Year together, we usually arrange to play football, we have a night out, I think we've been enjoying each other. (I, international, EEE, T2)

In general, they believed that they have improved their IC at the end of the first semester by getting to know a diverse population.

I think I learned more about what is appropriate and what is not by getting closer to people and I am able to question them and ask them, just get a general knowledge of what their reality is beyond the usual stereotype. (F, international, EEE, T2)

I think in the first semester, I tended to get frustrated by different things, these cultural differences and our conversation. I think in the second semester, I was more empathetic and more understanding. (R, EU, Business, T2)

After four months, most of the international students claimed that local students were not as approachable as other international students and they preferred to make friends with people from their own country or other international students who shared similar overseas experiences. Students also mentioned that the local drinking culture could prevent them from socialising with each other. Besides, some home students who came from other cities pointed out the difficulty to make contact with other home students since they have already had their social circles locally. Classes that are seen as multicultural by students provided them an opportunity to interact and socialise with course mates from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, places such as student accommodation were also a good platform to meet and interact with people as students reported. Most students claimed that they have improved their IC by interacting with other students from different cultural backgrounds.

*Nine months into the programme (T3)*



After nine months, most international interviewees said that they did not make as many local friends as they expected. They still believed that local students were not as friendly as other international students and it may be because international students shared similar overseas experiences with them:

...I have two close friends, one is from Indonesia and another from Vietnam. (O, international, TESOL, T3)

One of them come from Pakistan, she is my flatmate and another one is from Turkey my course mates... (E, international, EEE, T3)

Some of the interviewees stated that they preferred to make friends with people who come from the same country since socialising and talking with people who shared the same first language made them feel comfortable. They think that it was not necessary to make friends with local students, anyone would be fine as long as they feel comfortable to talk to. A participant who was keen on making diverse friendships, and even avoided making friends with co-nationals at the beginning, admitted that she had changed this attitude and found it was easier to make friends with co-nationals since they shared the same language and background:

In the beginning, I tried to avoid talking with co-nationals because I was thinking to be more internationalised since I was here in the UK, but later I realised it was not right...Now I am more like being with someone who makes me feel comfortable regardless of their nationalities, in general, I feel like I am more comfortable and happy with Chinese since we speak the same language. (O, international, TESOL, T3)

It's just easier to get along with people from your own culture who speak your own language and understand you. (R, EU, Business, T3)

On the other hand, some international students expressed that it was difficult to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds. It was not because of the language itself, but lack of relevant cultural knowledge. For example, some students mentioned that they do not understand each other's jokes, which was awkward. Also, they worried that they may say something culturally inappropriate to offend other people.

If you have grammar mistakes when you are talking with others, it doesn't affect anything because they will understand the content. But I find it's pretty difficult to tell jokes to other people who do not seem to think it's funny due to dissimilar cultures and vice versa. I sometimes don't know what to say to English students really. I am afraid I would say something inappropriate and offend them (L, international, EDU, T3).

A home student mentioned that since this is only a one-year programme, he did not want to spend much time to meet new people and make a life.

I know in September, I won't be living here, then won't make that much effort to make your life here. (D, home, EEE, T3)

Despite that participants had different experiences in terms of social contacts at the host university, most of them claimed that they have improved their IC by interacting and socialising with people from different cultural backgrounds.

I feel it has improved by the experience and the contact with multicultural individuals. (F, international, EEE, T3)

I used to use the same approach to approach everyone from different cultures, but after a few misunderstanding from my side and their side, I found that I cannot approach people the same way because the culture is different so my IC has improved that way. (E, international, EEE, T3)

After nine-months, both home and international students experienced difficulties in making friends with each other and it was a continuous problem throughout the sojourn. The majority of international students emphasised that it was easier to make friends with co-nationals and non-co-nationals since they shared similar experiences, culture or language. Some home students in comparison to the international students felt it was less important to establish new social contacts on the home campus since they already had their own social networks (friends and family). Interestingly, other home students who did not come from the local city also reported this issue and hence it was not only exclusive to international students.

Similar to T2, students claimed that they had improved their IC by interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It seems the host university provided students with a multicultural learning environment, enabling them to socialise with people from diverse cultural backgrounds and developing students' IC. The qualitative results may contradict the quantitative result suggesting that students' IC may not be developed over nine months. However, the quantitative data of IC development is an overall result taking into account students' academic<sup>47</sup> and sociocultural experiences. It also shows that although students felt they had developed their IC, it does not mean their IC had developed since IC can be an

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<sup>47</sup> This was discussed in sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 in relation to the quantitative result of the MPQ.

ongoing process and its development can be hard to be observed over a short period of time.

#### **5.5.4 Qualitative findings - *Intercultural adaptation***

In this section, students' intercultural experiences are particularly explored at three time stages (T1, T2, and T3), covering the issues of cultural shock<sup>48</sup>, and other difficulties and challenges for both home and international students that impact their adaptation.

##### *At the beginning of the programme (T1)*

Staff from different disciplines pointed out that their international students experienced cultural shock since they were new to the country and culture.

There is a key challenge for students in terms of coming to a different country, and in many aspects, a lot of students want to do that in order to experience a different culture but that doesn't mean that there isn't a cultural shock when they actually get here and find it is quite different compared to their expectations... (S5, female, EEE)

It is worth noting that International and EU participants with prior overseas experience provided fewer accounts of culture shock than those without any prior international and intercultural experience. The former group of interviewees declared that since they became used to being in a foreign country on their own, they did not find it very difficult. It was just a matter of getting familiar with everything culturally:

I lived in different countries before, I didn't find it really different. It wasn't much difference. (E, international, EEE, T1)

...I kind of already have the view about how things will going on so I think cultural shock is not a big thing for me... (F, international, EDU, T1)

For those who went abroad for the first time, they reported experiencing some degree of cultural shock. Especially, the drinking culture was something frequently mentioned by a few of the male international participants but since most of the participants had prior international or intercultural experience, this issue was not a common concern among the interviewees:

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<sup>48</sup> The term 'culture shock' has been frequently used by interviewees in this study and hence the authors chose to use it as one of the themes even though it has been a contested notion in the literature.

...when I walk on the street, people come to hug you, I don't know if they get drunk or not. For me, it is also a cultural shock... (L, international, EDU, T1)

Although EU and international students expressed a mixed feeling of amazement and shock about the local culture in the interviews, they enjoyed being in the new country and were especially amazed by how friendly the local people were in the host city. The participants were curious and excited about experiencing the local culture and life. On the other hand, they felt shocked when they encountered cultural differences. Generally speaking, interviewees reported that despite all these minor cultural differences such as drinking tea with milk, or some basic rules, they felt happy to be here and ready to embrace more of the cultural differences. Cultural differences can often be referred to as the following aspects:

Drinking tea with milk. That's shocking to me coz in Poland, on one does. (B, international, Business, T1)

...but here they call their name very naturally. The second thing is transportation, we ride on our right hand side. (P, international, EDU, T1)

On the other hand, home students also reported their 'shock' at the beginning of the programme. As they mentioned the large number of international students on the programme, the heavy workload and unfamiliarity of starting postgraduate study. Generally, the data showed that international students experienced more cultural shock than home students at the beginning of their programme:

Probably the workload, probably the step out from undergraduate, a bit of shock really... now my course oversea students gone to 80%, where before it was 1%, 0% so it's a big change in that definitely. (S, home, EEE, T1)

It seems that both home and international cohorts experienced some level of adaptation academically, socially and culturally. They generally used 'shocked' but 'positive', 'scared' but 'excited' to describe their mixed feelings about the new experiences. International participants mentioned concerns and difficulties particularly around issues of homesickness, unpredictable pressure from studies, communication problems, problems of integrating or accommodation problems, while home students reported challenges mainly related to a changing environment, finding accommodation, managing workload, and adapting from undergraduate to postgraduate studies. The impression from the data was that international students

experienced more pressure and difficulties during their transition than home counterparts. In accordance with the above quantitative results, home students showed a higher mean score for SI at T1 than international students. As international students expressed that they experienced a series of adaptation problems when they first arrived, which prevent them from being socially active, however they intend to meet more people. Home students, on the other hand, reported that they have already had their social networks and they tend to spend much time on existing social circle<sup>49</sup>.

Some of the interviewees felt anxious about their new journey at this very early stage of their studies. Most of their academic stress came from the unknown, for example uncertainties about future assignments, exams or deadlines, yet very few who had already started their programme reported from their actual study experience. Issues mentioned including language problems, for example, experiencing difficulty in understanding the local English accent, or problems communicating with local students. Therefore, at this stage, students did experience some academic stress, but not very severe, and only a small amount of students experienced these difficulties:

...I guess there will be a lot of deadlines coming soon so there will be some pressure for this project. (A, international, Business, T1)

One of our senior tutors teaches a very essential module but I feel difficult to understand his accent. I am struggling with a local accent. Another thing is as an international student, I feel hard to express myself when talking to other students (Q, international, Business, T1)

Communication problem, for example, when we need to discuss something in class and I sit next to British students, they sometimes tell about jokes but I don't know why they laugh so hard and I didn't get it. (L, international, EDU, T1)

It seemed that both international and home students experienced similar challenges to some extent, for example, changing of environment, managing academic workload and accommodation problems. However, home students reported less academic and socio-cultural adaptation difficulties than international students. In general, international students experienced more challenges than their domestic counterparts in studying in the host university:

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<sup>49</sup> This was discussed in sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3

Probably the workload, probably the step out from undergraduate, a bit of shock really. (S, home, EEE, T1)

I think the only challenge that I can think of is the homesickness. (P, international, TESOL, T1)

I think the biggest challenge is you miss your home, your family, the food and the weather. (A, international, Business, T1)

Only very few international and EU students who had spent several years completing their Bachelor degree in another country where the official language was completely different from their first language stated that they had no difficulties at all:

In coping with life in general, no difficulty at all. I know it sounds a miracle but I have no difficulties. (R, EU, Business, T1)

Different from all the other student cohorts, mature home students expressed that they had very few challenges except working online since they had been accustomed to handwritten work when they did their first degree:

...when I first went to my undergraduate, everything was handwritten, now everything is online, you type online, you email online... (M, home, Business, T1)

#### *Four months into the programme (T2)*

After four months of studies, most of the international students mentioned issues and challenges that affected their learning experience, which caused a certain level of emotional instability. These challenges include anxiety about studies, the pressure of exams, the language barrier, homesickness and local weather conditions. Weather conditions were another frequently mentioned issue that bothered many international students especially for those who were originally from places with warmer climates. The 'windy', 'rainy' and 'cold' weather during winter, to some degree, limited some students' intention of going out. International students suffered from sickness caused by the weather conditions throughout the year.

Great apart from some days, like today it's cold in the morning but it isn't as bad as I expected, now it's getting better, the amount of light we got, I think in December and January was very late, I left library really dark, I don't like that part very much. (I, international, EEE, T2)

...I haven't been keeping too well, especially the climate, it's very cold here and we are not used to that extreme cold in India so every day the temperature is very low and there is a lot of rain so I haven't been able to go out that much. (A, international, Business, T2)

The pressure of exams concerns different aspects including unfamiliar modes of assessment, confidence in the use of the English language, or fear of failure. In addition, some students also mentioned their disappointment at not achieving their goals and expectations, and therefore a sense of dissatisfaction about their own performance. It seemed that for the international students, most of the problems they reported at the early stage of their studies remained concern after four months. But over time, they experienced stress that mainly came from studies and preparation for exams. International students consistently expressed their worries about exam results:

I escaped home for three days to Russia, I was missing so much. I want somebody who is close to me, my friends and my boyfriend. I want to meet someone, to hug someone because I was so stressed out. (Y, international, EEE, T2)

This quote illustrated another emerging issue that international students became lonely over time, due to being far from home and study stress. After the excitement of being in the UK for the first few months, international students began to feel lonely in a foreign country. Instead of saying 'homesickness', they began to describe themselves as 'lonely'. At this stage, although they had developed friendships and started to become familiar with everything, they still said that they felt lonely in a way that was not mentioned by home students:

I feel very lonely. No one knows me and no one is accompanying you. (S, international, Business, T2)

Sometimes I really feel very lonely, that's the conclusion. (Y, international, EEE, T2)

Data showed that male students, in general, reported experiencing less academic pressure and more ES than female participants. While home students showed less academic pressure and more ES than international and EU students. However, there were no significant differences in the quantitative data to support these interview findings.

I have experienced many difficulties and challenges in my studies...I encountered some problems which I didn't expect before but I try my best to overcome them...for the first couple of months, I didn't adapt well and caused some emotional problems... (S, international, Business, T2)

...there is the brochure about students' wellbeing and there is a consultation about how you feel about studying here and I was like for a second, I thought maybe I should do this. It's kind of sad... (F, international, CCC, T2)

I was really stressed...I am still a bit anxious about what marks did I get because this formative exam was different from the one I had in Russia and it was really hard... (Y, international, EEE, T2)

I was expecting to be hard to get back to studying but no, it's been great that I adjusted well...I felt the demand of the British education was a little bit higher but they have not. (I, international, EEE, T2)

It seemed that participants' attitudes towards the UK culture<sup>50</sup> changed from curious and excited to less concerned and less interested after four months:

I don't feel I am that curious any more...in the beginning, I felt everything was so new and I want to explore them but now I feel I need to focus on study. (O, international, EDU, T2)

On the other hand, home students also mentioned about their difficulties and challenges while adapting to the new learning environment. For example, one home student said that cultural differences can be challenging for him. It seems that not only international students were experiencing cultural differences, home students also experienced similar things.

Working in the multicultural environment, I guess we got cultural differences (D, home, EEE, T2).

Staff participants were also aware that their students had undergone many difficulties; the challenge was not only from the study but also from building friendships and experiencing culture shock. However, most of the time, staff emphasised the academic difficulties rather than the social and cultural challenges that students faced. They also reported more about the challenges international students encountered but were not aware of the challenges that home students had in terms of academic adjustment. There was an inherent assumption that international students struggled more than EU and home students. However, they overlooked home students' adjustment from being an undergraduate to a postgraduate student.

One cohort feels like struggling...you know it's all sorts of everyday settling in in addition to all the settling into the university, into new education system and new language and new life almost together with potential issues... (S1, female, Business)

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<sup>50</sup> The term 'UK culture' was used by the interviewees.



In addition, as an important element of IC, many students showed their empathy towards other cultures but some participants who already demonstrated awareness in the early teaching weeks were those who had prior overseas experiences. For those who had never been abroad before, their changes in CE were noticeable and easier to identify than those who had prior overseas experiences. Interview data also reflected that international and EU and mature home students showed more empathy towards otherness than young home students.

Now I've learned don't judge other ways of doing things in terms of different traditions or religious and don't presume your ways of doing things are always right. You need to put yourself in other's shoes. (O, international, TESOL, T2)

Furthermore, students showed an improvement in their emotional stability. They made a point that they had become less frustrated and much calmer when they dealt with problems. Although there were many problems that students still struggled with, their attitudes changed when they faced problems compared to four months previously. Some of the interviewees claimed since there was no one around and there was no one to rely on, the only solution was to solve things by themselves.

I am not as frustrated as I was when I deal with problems... (P, international, TESOL, T2)

I feel I have become more independent and I become a little bit calmer, I used to be getting angry or upset easily... (A, international, Business, T2)

At T1, students, especially international students, were very interested in getting to know the host culture even though there were some cultural differences and cultural shock they had experienced. After four months, students seemed to go through a lot of difficulties and challenges in their intercultural adaptation, such as overcoming cultural differences, homesickness, academic pressure, and language barriers and they became less curious about the 'host' culture. Although home students also experienced challenges of encountering cultural differences, it has been overlooked by academic staff.

### *Nine months into the programme (T3)*

At this point, participants seemed to adapt to the local culture and they no longer reported any cultural shock. Although some Asian students still believed that the local drinking culture was hard to agree with, some other participants enjoyed the local

drinking culture. Some participants had stereotypes about the UK but after some time they started to develop their own understanding of some of the so-called stereotypical issues, for example, punctuality:

I used to think that British people are so on time, they are not... (E, international, EEE, T3)

Students commented on their assumptions about the British reserved personality. But people had different opinions about it, and sometimes they can be the complete opposite.

I've heard that they are very cold people especially if you want to socialise to them, however in my opinion, if they have one beer they will become the most friendly people on earth so I like the drinking culture. (E, international, EEE, T3)

...I still think that British people probably a little bit cold sometimes... (Y, international, EEE, T3)

A few participants, especially Asian students, mentioned unpleasant experiences that had occurred outside of the university, a lack of belonging and a sense of racism and discrimination, which was totally different from what they experienced at the university. These unpleasant experiences outside the university brought many negative feelings, which can be directly linked to homesickness and a lack of belonging.

... I still feel like I am not belonging to this community, I don't want to say racism but to some extent, I still feel that I am kind of different from local people, my style is different. To some extent, I am not really felt I am welcomed, just in some cases, an academic environment, it's not a problem but when I went out, the way that the shop assistant interacts with local people and the way they interact with me like Asian, I can feel it's different. (P, international, TESOL, T3)

...I got friends they are boys, they get discriminated in the street by British people, two of my classmates are Chinese, two boys, they get discriminated in the street, some random guy shouted at them bad words, like go back to your country why are you here... (E, international, EEE, T3)

A few of them said they felt more pressure than in the first semester, but now they managed much better than before because they were more adapted to the UK education system. One thing they frequently talked about was how they became familiar with the assignments, such as writing an essay and sitting an exam. In the third round of interviews, most of the interviewees believed that they were not as

anxious as they used to be and they rarely talked about any learning difficulties or challenges.

For this semester, one thing I feel most is that I am having less pressure... (O, international, TESOL, T3)

I am adapting more, engaged more to the environment so I am getting, having a clear idea of what I should do and what lecturers expect us to do. (P, international, TESOL, T3)

Now the second semester, in that sense was much smoother and now familiar with how it works. I was even less stressed by the exams because I knew already what to expect more or less, obviously, the exam forms were different but in that sense, I was much calmer and confident. (R, EU, Business, T3)

Even though international students felt that they were more adapted to the new environment and less stressed, the post MPQ test showed that home students still scored significantly higher than international students in social initiative. It could be because home students generally need less adaptation to their own country compared to international students and the former were more culturally at home.

You need to make effort to understand local students, as a foreign student, you are expected to be more open-minded probably more willing to adapt while British students, they are in their home country, they are probably expect you to adapt and sometimes it hard. (R, EU, Business, T3)

I am from 150 miles from where I grow up but I feel culturally at home here like everyone at Newcastle. (D, home, EEE, T3)

It appeared that the academic, social and cultural aspects of students' learning experiences in the host university led to the development of IC, particularly OM, CE, and ES. Specifically, it would appear that ES, OM, and CE can be developed in a short period of time. In the interviews, international students reported that they became more confident, independent, more responsible and better at time management after spending a year abroad. On the contrary, home students did not mention any such developments specifically. But in terms of IC, both student cohorts stated that they learned many things from other cultures, including how to communicate with each other.

That's definitely another thing I've learned is the way to totally rephrase things or redo things so someone hasn't understood it, I will act it out, just change how I said it, try to rephrase things over and over until they understand. (S, home, EEE, T3)

In the early teaching weeks, both home and international students experienced more or less the same difficulties including pressure about managing academic workload, adapting to a new environment and sorting out accommodation issues. Other than that, international students experienced some difficulties that home students did not experience related to English language and communication problems, and homesickness. The result of the pre MPQ test showed that home students had a significantly higher mean score in SI than international students and it supported the notion that international students were less socially active than home students especially when the former experienced more adaptation problems academically and socio-culturally. Halfway through the year, both home and international students started to become stressed over exams, but international students were more stressed and anxious than their 'home' counterparts. Both cohorts suffered from communication difficulties caused by language barriers and cultural differences. Moreover, international students tended to experience 'loneliness' over time, which was attributed to being far away from home and academic stress, which may have led to the result that home students had a higher mean score than international students at both T1 and T2.

Generally speaking, students reported that they were more adapted both academically and culturally during the last round of interviews. However, there were some cases that students found to be difficult, which related to culturally different communication habits that caused awkwardness and unhappiness. One participant said that 'I made mistakes due to the cultural differences. British people were expressive but in my culture, people tend to be shy and reserved. A lot of times, people tried to tell me something but I failed to give them a response which made me rude and not friendly.'

As discussed in section 5.3.1, student participants' CE, SI and OM were positively associated with their prior overseas experience. This section further suggested that international students who had prior overseas experiences experienced less culture shock than those without any prior international experiences. In general, although international students reported some 'culture shock experiences' (minor culture differences), they felt positively about their experience especially when they had just arrived. After a few months, international students stated that they had adapted to the local custom and culture, even though few

(Asian) participants said there were certain things they still could not understand, such as the drinking culture.

## **5.6 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter illustrated students' intercultural experiences and their development of IC over a nine-month period in the host university, incorporating both interview and survey data. It began with student and staff perceptions of internationalisation of the host university (5.2). Both students and staff displayed a good understanding of internationalisation of the host university from different perspectives but they all reflected the host university's internationalisation strategy to some extent. It can be summarised as 'teaching', 'research' and 'students experience' and disciplinary difference have been found. Academic staff from the Engineering discipline valued more on preparing students' employment skills while Education staff placed more attention on students' development of IC skills.

Furthermore, the data showed that upon starting at the university, students tended to see the university as internationalised due to the large number of international students and staff, and the university's good service to accommodate all the students' needs. However, by the time the participants finished their studies, their definition of internationalisation had changed. They reported that the lack of integration among home and international students can hardly be seen as international since most of the international participants had problems integrating with the local students.

Moreover, pre-course factors such as prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language proficiency and gender have a direct influence on students' IC development (5.3). The MPQ results showed that students who have prior overseas experiences tend to have higher aspects of IC (CE, SI and OM) scores than those without prior overseas experiences and the former experienced less culture shock than the latter. What is more, students who had prior long-term study experience tend to score higher in their IC (SI and OM) than those who only had prior short-term business or traveling experiences. Besides, females had a significantly higher score in CE than males, supported by the interview data, female interview participants were more expressive and showed more empathy towards others who came from different cultural backgrounds.

Compared with home students, international students' learning motivations for studying in the host university can be more complex. They reported that in

addition to academic achievement, international and intercultural exposure was also very important. On the other hand, home students regarded academic achievement as the only motivation. Although there were different learning motivations between home and international students, they did not contribute to the IC development quantitatively. It led to the differences in students' intercultural experiences over time. Drawing on the qualitative results, for those who were interested in experiencing other cultures and enhancing intercultural exposure, they appeared to take part in social activities actively and making more international contacts. Quantitative findings showed that students' English language ability (listening and speaking) and IC (SI and OM) have a median correlation to each other. In addition, survey showed a significant increase in students' writing, speaking, and listening skills from T1 to T2, supplemented by interview data, students reported an increase in their English ability.

Regarding students' in-course factors on their intercultural experiences and IC development, this chapter was continually organised into in-course academic experience (5.4) and in-course socio-cultural experience (5.5). In students' academic experience, themes such as curriculum and group work have been emerged and discussed with their IC development. Participants from the Engineering school claimed that their curriculum content was not very internationalised while curriculum in Business school can be naturally internationalised, but commonly their lecturers made efforts to apply to a global context in teaching. In both Business and Engineering schools, group work has been frequently pointed out by both home and international students. During the first round interview, participants were struggled to do group projects with other students due to language barriers, communication problems, and cultural differences. Most of the participants described this experience as 'frustrating' and 'exhausting' since working with others can cause misunderstandings, confusion, and it was time-consuming. While a small number of participants saw this as 'challenging', yet 'rewarding' and they claimed that they have changed their attitudes to become more open-minded and empathetic by working with people from other backgrounds.

However, some international participants felt they were being excluded by home students on and off campus. Many of them think that although their learning environment was full of home and other international students, the lack of communication among them made their experience less international and intercultural. Both interview and survey data has illustrated the drop in students' OM

after nine-year study particularly in the Engineering school. Participants also showed that a heavy workload and academic pressure have prevented them from being socially active. At the beginning of their sojourn, international students showed a strong interest in taking part in different social activities and meeting people from different countries. This has changed since they started their programmes. This is due to them, feeling less confident in their learning abilities and insecure about their academic performances. Their experiences have reached the lowest point in their sojourn. After the second term, students reported that they adapted and became more confident in themselves. They planned to spend more time meeting with other course mates since they felt more relieved by their studies.

International students in general experienced more difficulties than home students, such as feeling homesickness, having pressure from not being familiar with the UK education systems, language barriers, and experiencing culture shock. However, it does not mean home students did not experience any difficulties at all. From the interview data, home students also reported their challenges such as, adapting to a new environment, not familiar with master's level studies and having a large number of international students in class. However, most of the time, academic staff tended to see the difficulties and challenges that international students experience. Apart from the great asset that international students brought to the host university, for example, diversity and international perspectives, academic staff also experienced some challenges such as, updating their knowledge with different contexts since their students came from different countries; teaching and assessing students with different learning backgrounds; having difficulty in taking all students' needs into account; integrating all students together.

## **Chapter 6 Discussion on Internationalisation and Students' Development of Intercultural Competence**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, findings are interpreted and discussed in relation to previous studies regarding students' and staff perceptions and experiences of internationalisation and students' development of IC as a learning outcome of their experiences of internationalisation.

### **6.2 Internationalisation in Higher Education**

This section discusses the extent to which staff and students engage with internationalisation at the host university (see Figure 10) around the themes of internationalisation strategy, IoC, and internationalised experiences. It aims to address the first research question of this study: How is internationalisation understood by staff and students across different disciplines within the host university, and are there differences between these understandings? It begins with the discussion of staff understandings of internationalisation (see 6.2.1) and students' perceptions of internationalisation (see 6.2.2). It is important to include all parties i.e. all students and staff in discussions about internationalisation, in order to avoid the problem of emphasising one party over another (Trahar & Hyland, 2011).



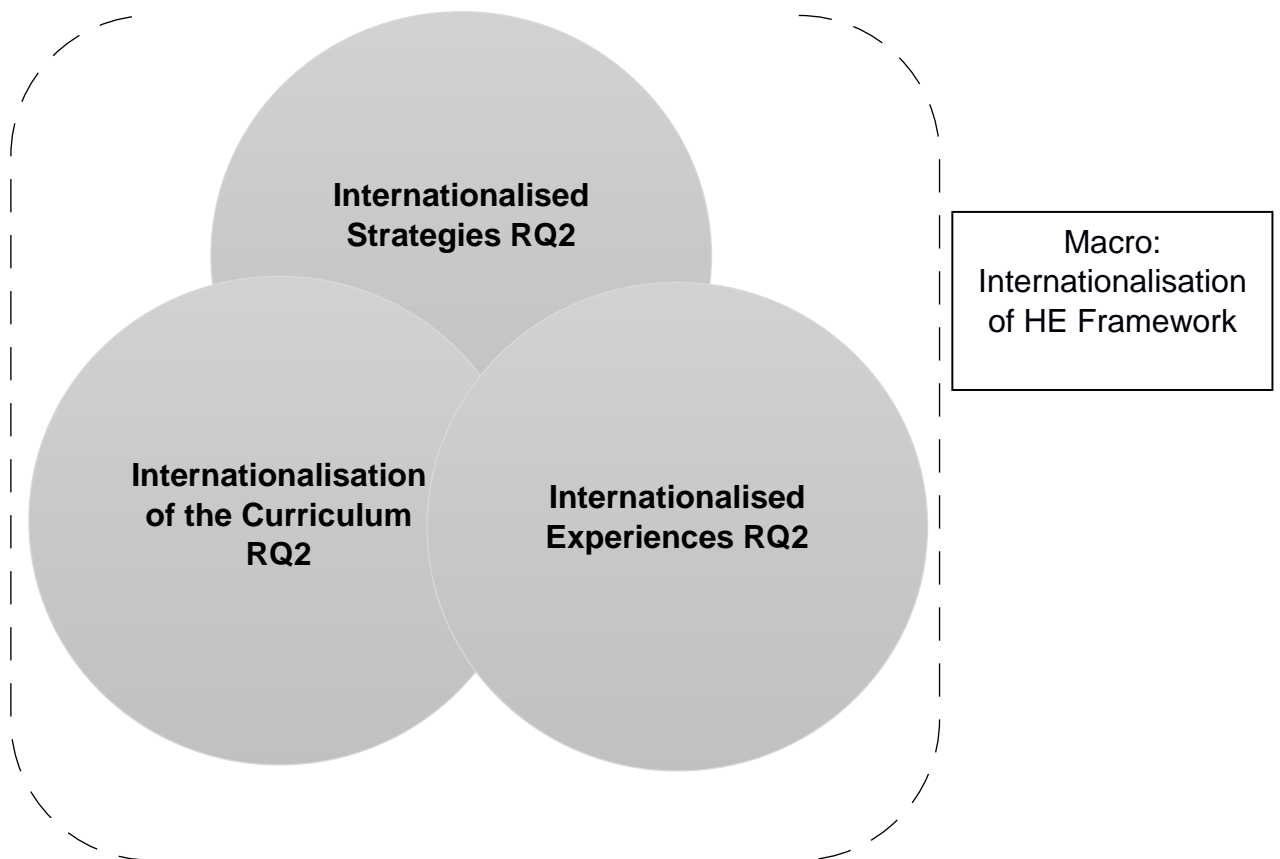


Figure 10 The Conceptual Focus of Section 6.2

### **6.2.1 Staff perceptions of internationalisation – disciplinary variations**

Academic staff are believed to play an important role in the process of HE internationalisation (Caruana, 2010). Their understandings and attitudes towards internationalisation were explored in relation to the first research question on how is internationalisation understood by academic staff across different disciplines and are there differences between these understandings. In this study, academic staff in general considered that ‘teaching for all students’, ‘international research collaborations’, and ‘student experiences’ were the most important elements in enacting the internationalisation agenda while only a few participants referred to the strategies for recruitment of international students and enhancement of the university’s academic excellence or reputation. This shows an understanding of internationalisation from both IaH (teaching for all students and student experiences) and internationalisation abroad (overseas campuses, international placement, etc.) perspectives. However, the finding contrasts with Jackson, Robson and Huddart (2012) who found that academic staff in science disciplines have a rather narrow understanding of internationalisation and they saw it as a market-driven strategy. It is true that one staff from the Engineering discipline interpreted the internationalisation

agenda in relation to incoming international students, but others had a rather broader understanding and they referred to a range of elements of the internationalisation strategy such as student experience, international research collaboration, and teaching for all.

The most frequently discussed element of internationalisation was teaching. Although the Engineering school was seen as less 'international' than the Education and Business schools in terms of the 'international' element in their programmes, most of the academic staff acknowledged the importance of integrating international dimensions into their teaching practices and teaching content in order to accommodate their diverse students. This reflects that HE internationalisation was mostly understood and carried out as curriculum internationalisation by the staff at the host university, which is in accordance with Knight's (2008) assertion that internationalisation is curriculum-oriented. Beelen and Jones (2015) reinforced the importance of internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) by integrating international and intercultural elements into the curriculum for all students who study on home campuses. In this study, staff from all the three disciplines were aware of the importance of internationalisation and respect for the values that international students have brought with them. The finding is in line with Jackson, Robson and Huddart (2012) who found that staff showed a high level of acceptance of internationalising higher education.

A decade ago, it was suggested that the Engineering discipline was heavily fact-based and less inclusive and international than the Business and Education fields (Zimitat, 2008), and there was a view that staff in 'hard' disciplines may not see the need to adjust their teaching content to accommodate all student needs, compared to 'soft' disciplines where staff may be more open-minded about changing and adjusting their teaching (Sawir, 2011). More recently, Marginson (2011) indicated that internationalisation has pushed the development of international education, particularly in vocational programmes such as business and engineering. This was evident in the findings of this study. Interestingly, academic staff displayed positive attitudes towards having international dimensions in their teaching practices in both 'soft' and 'hard' disciplines. In light of internationalisation, more staff in the Engineering discipline realised the increasing possibility for their students to work in an international company and the importance of understanding the global context. In order to meet the needs of all students in the class, internationalised curriculum are now receiving increasing attention in engineering disciplines. This may reflect the fact

that the three disciplines are all 'applied' disciplines sharing some similar features. For example, 'applied' disciplines value knowledge application and integration, while knowledge acquisition may be emphasised more in 'pure' disciplines (Smart & Ethington, 1995). According to Biglan (1973), 'applied' fields are gregarious and involve many interactions in teaching, which may explain why lecturers in 'applied' disciplines often recognise the value of international and intercultural knowledge in teaching (Clifford, 2009). However, it should be noted that my study focused on academic staff who taught master programmes involving a large number of international students while in Sawir's (2011) study, academic staff across the whole university were interviewed and in Zimitat's (2008) study, undergraduate students' perceptions on the international dimension of the curriculum were explored.

In addition to curriculum-oriented perceptions of internationalisation, some staff also mentioned providing students with positive experiences as an important element in their understanding of internationalisation, with a particular focus on graduate attributes. Some small disciplinary differences were found in staff perceptions regarding graduate attributes as learning outcomes of internationalisation. Staff in the Engineering discipline noted that the development of students' employability skills was essential since they may work anywhere in the world in the future. In addition to academic knowledge, some generic skills, such as communication, presentation, research, and writing skills were considered to help students perform better in the workplace. The Engineering staff emphasised a set of employability skills as a learning outcome of internationalisation. This relates to the argument that in the 'hard applied' disciplines (e.g. engineering), students' future career skills and needs are prioritised (Braxton, 1995). Other more recent research (e.g. Clifford, 2009; Sawir, 2011) also found that Engineering students' employability skills and the ability to fulfill future career needs were seen as important learning outcomes of internationalisation.

On the other hand, staff from the 'soft applied' Education discipline noted that the development of students' intercultural awareness and open mindsets were important since they will live and work in multicultural environments. The importance attributed to intercultural skills as student learning outcomes to prepare graduates to contribute responsibly in an interconnected world, reflects a broader sense of the purpose of education that goes beyond employability skills (Braxton, 1995). This resonates with Knight's (2013) rationale for internationalisation, 'to develop graduates who are more internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled, and prepared

to live and work in more culturally diverse communities' (p. 5), and de Wit et al. (2015) who emphasised the civic contribution of internationalisation. It is also in alignment with Pattison and Robson (2013) and Jones (2019), suggesting the importance of both personal and professional development as an outcome of internationalisation – 'interculturalisation'. The discussion further illustrates that although IoC is a key element in internationalisation, it is understood as an approach or strategy to implement the internationalisation agenda rather than the whole definition of internationalisation.

Although staff recognised the benefits of internationalisation, some of them reported certain challenges that they experienced for teaching and assessing, which have been discussed by previous research studies (e.g. Turner & Robson, 2009; Skyrme & McGee, 2016; Merrick, 2013; Robson & Wihlborg, 2018). Staff claimed that internationalisation increases their workloads and pressure since they need to update their knowledge in order to understand and teach students with diverse cultural backgrounds. It was also reported that evaluating international students with the same standard as home students can be difficult, given that they had different levels of English. It shows that even though staff tended to have positive attitudes towards the presence of international students, the challenges that they were facing may not be highly valued. An emphasis on providing professional development to address pedagogical challenges has been suggested by Daniels (2013) and Hyland et al. (2008).

Different disciplinary cultures can be glimpsed from the different understandings of internationalisation among staff who teach in different disciplines. In this study, internationalisation is generally understood to incorporate three general areas - teaching, research, and student experience. Although staff from different disciplines showed positive attitudes towards internationalisation by integrating international elements in their teaching practices, slight differences were found in the learning outcomes that were considered to be important in response to internationalisation. Staff from the Engineering discipline focused more on the outcome of students' employability skills, while staff from the Education discipline stressed broader outcomes associated with the development of intercultural skills and awareness. In fact, both understandings fit well with the concept of existential internationalism and the importance of internationalising oneself to be better prepared to live and work in the fast-changing world (Stromquist, 2002). While Education staff aligned with more social and culturally oriented rationales for

internationalisation (Knight, 2004) rather than more instrumental (Stier, 2006) or economically-driven rationales (Knight, 2004), all staff commented that internationalisation affected their teaching and students were expected to work worldwide in the future. This suggests that differences in perceptions of, and implementation of, IoC between staff from 'soft' and 'hard' disciplines (e.g. Sawir, 2013; Zimitat, 2008) is less significant in this study than in the literature where different perceptions among staff have been particularly emphasised between 'soft' and 'hard' disciplines. Future studies could focus on investigating different discourses of internationalisation among different stakeholders (e.g. policy makers in the universities; academic and administrative staff, and students from 'applied' and 'soft' disciplines).

### **6.2.2 Student perceptions of internationalisation**

In relation to the first research question on the student perspective, this section further discusses home and international students' perceptions of internationalisation in order to avoid an emphasis on the international student experience that has been prevalent in earlier internationalisation studies. The results highlight how students perceive internationalisation and the variations in their perceptions that appear over time. In the interviews, student participants emphasised two main aspects of their understanding of internationalisation: curriculum (international dimensions) and experience (learning environment, student diversity and social integration). To begin with the discussion of the curriculum aspect, similar to academic staff, students addressed the international dimensions of the curriculum in reflecting internationalisation in their study experiences. Few differences were found among different disciplines. Most of the student participants showed strong expectations to study from an international perspective and their satisfaction regarding opportunities to study with people from different cultural backgrounds for exposure to different ways of thinking. This was understood to provide them with the knowledge and experiences of working in an international environment to benefit their future careers, in line with Wihlborg (2004), who found that student conceptions of internationalisation were generally understood from the pedagogical stance. Students further illustrate that international dimensions in the curriculum and the knowledge about other cultures can equip them with relevant skills and abilities to work with people from other countries in the future workplace and to apply their academic knowledge to broader global issues. This, to some extent, reflects the importance of

values-based understanding of internationalisation among students across different disciplines. However, this result contrasts with Zimitat (2008) who found that students from the Engineering and Education disciplines were less inclined to see the importance of international dimensions of the curriculum content benefiting their future than students from the Business.

The multicultural learning environment was mentioned by many students as their first impression of being in an internationalised institution, however, their attitudes towards learning in a multicultural environment changed over time. At the beginning of the academic year, students, in general, tended to have a positive and excited attitude towards their learning environment even though for some students, their programmes were not multicultural in terms of the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds in the class. This is in accordance with Schartner and Cho's (2016) study where diversity has been identified by students as a predominant theme to define an internationalised university. However, the difference is that the present study found students' attitudes changed based on their intercultural experiences over time and therefore diversity may not be the most appropriate indicator that associated with internationalisation in a long term. The findings demonstrate that most of the international students who previously perceived the learning environment as multicultural, noted a lack of interaction and integration despite the diversity of the classroom population after a few months, particularly with home students. This issue has been reported in a number of studies, suggesting that the interaction and integration of international and home students can be problematic both socially and academically (Andrade, 2006; Peacock & Harrison, 2009; Montgomery, 2009; Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010; Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015). This is further unpacked in section 6.4.2. The findings from the present study suggest that the core value of being internationalised should not only be associated with the diversity of the population (e.g. recruiting increasingly more international students), but the effectiveness of interaction and integration between students. Integration with other ethnic groups on the home campus is seen as an important aspect of the internationalisation agenda (Almeida et al., 2018; Harrison, 2015; Knight, 2008). The concept of internationalisation can be expanded from simply having a diverse student population to the inclusion of, and interactions between, all student bodies (Groepel-Klein, Germelmann, & Glaum, 2010) because a shared environment does not in itself guarantee an internationalised experience (Peacock, 2009).

### **6.2.3 Summary**

Regarding the first research question – ‘How are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood by staff and students across different disciplines (Education, Engineering, and Business) at the host university’, the results suggested that academic staff from all three disciplines acknowledged the importance of internationalisation from mainly three aspects: an internationalised curriculum, international research collaborations and student experiences. It shows that staff have a rather comprehensive understanding of internationalisation that goes beyond simply mobility and diversity. Although they showed positive attitudes towards the impact that internationalisation brings to their teaching practices, slight differences were observed in staff perceptions of the learning outcome of internationalisation. Staff from the Engineering discipline were more concerned with students’ employability skills whilst staff from the Education discipline focused more on the students’ development of intercultural awareness and skills. A positive finding was recognised through academic staff interviews. All academic staff interviewed in this study recognised the importance of preparing their students to better live and work in the fast-changing world as an essential graduate attribute. The disciplinary difference was found to be not as significant in this study than in the literature.

Furthermore, the study observed a change in students’ understandings of an internationalised university and intercultural competence after nine months of study. At the beginning, students believed that the host university is internationalised because of the diverse student population, an open-minded and tolerant campus environment and exposure to different cultures and perspectives. After nine months, they emphasised the importance of having intercultural interactions and an internationalised curriculum as the purpose of studying in an internationalised university. Both staff and students perceived the importance of becoming more open-minded and developing intercultural communication skills after studying in a multicultural environment. However, IC was not directly mentioned as a learning outcome of internationalisation. Additionally, it is noteworthy that students’ understandings of culture were naturally associated with nationalities before and after studying at the host university. They simply referred IC to the communication skills required between people from different countries. It shows that they have a rather narrow understanding of IC.

### **6.3 Pre-course Factors on IC Development**

This study is premised on the view that 'Internationalisation, in one way or another is about intercultural communication' (Stier, 2006, p. 5). This section presents and discusses findings related to IC, including pre-course influencing factors such as prior overseas experiences (section 6.3.1), English language proficiency (section 6.3.2), and disciplinary variations (section 6.3.3). This section aims to address the second research question in this study: How do pre-course factors (prior overseas experiences, learning motivations, English language proficiency, and gender) affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

#### **6.3.1 *Prior overseas experience***

In relation to the second research question, a number of research studies have already investigated prior overseas experience in association with IC (Kim, 1988; Furnham, 2004; Selmer, 2002; Hismanoglu, 2011). However, little has been known about types of prior overseas experience impacting the development of students' IC. The present study suggests that students' prior overseas experiences can have a positive effect on their IC development, particularly for CE, SI, and OM. This can be explained by Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis', suggesting that intergroup interactions reduce intergroup anxiety and prejudice. Therefore, previous intercultural experiences may lead to more open mind-sets and individuals who have had prior intercultural experiences may be more adaptive to similar situations in the future (Shaffer et al., 1999; Selmer, 2002). Furthermore, the findings suggest that the length of prior overseas experience is significant to IC. More specifically, the longer the prior international experience is, mostly for study or work purposes, the better intercultural adaptation and IC are in terms of SI and OM. Students are more likely to be interested and confident in approaching social activities and more open-minded to differences when they have long-term prior overseas experiences. The result has been confirmed by only a few studies (e.g. Torbiorn, 1982; Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008; Crowne, 2008), suggesting that the number and length of prior international experiences undergone by students, such as previous employment and education abroad experiences, can impact positively on their IC.

#### **6.3.2 *English language proficiency***

The present study found that international students in the Business, Education, and Engineering disciplines significantly improved their confidence in using English



throughout their sojourn, particularly in writing, listening, and speaking. In the interview data, most of the international participants expressed that they have improved their English after nine months. This is in line with previous studies suggesting that there is a positive association between language gain and study abroad (Watson, Siska, & Wolfel, 2013; Allen, 2010; Davidson, 2007) and the most frequently discussed aspect in the literature is the improvement of speaking skill (Llanes, 2010). In response to the second research question, one of the striking findings was that international students' listening and speaking skills positively correlated with their SI and OM. This means that students with better listening and speaking skills showed better mean scores in SI and OM and vice versa. However, based on the multiple linear regression analysis, the study found no significant difference between students' English language ability and the prediction of their IC development. This suggests that English language ability cannot predict IC in this study perhaps because a nine-month sojourn is too short to predict one's IC since it involves an ongoing and lengthy process. As English language ability was measured by student self-confidence, rather than language tests, this study suggests that it may be valuable for future studies to investigate students who study abroad for a longer period of time with the use of English language tests to predict their IC.

Nevertheless, qualitative findings suggest that English was perceived as an essential factor contributing to IC development by both - home and international students. This finding concurs with a number of studies (Martin-Beltran, 2010; Dooly, 2007; Young et al., 2013) in which English proficiency was seen as an important contributory factor in IC. In this study, English is the lingua franca deployed in group assignments and plays a functional role in the communication and exchange of different ideas. Better English skills result in a better academic discussion and thus a better understanding of others' viewpoints. Additionally, socially, English language is believed to be important for establishing intercultural friendships and social networking in and out of class. These two points are reinforced by several studies suggesting that English language proficiency enables international students to understand and cooperate with others, carry out quality social interactions (Sarwari & Wahab, 2016), overcome challenges (Zhang et al., 2012; Lin, 2011), maintain broad friendship networks with local students (Sawir et al., 2012; Sawir, 2013) and hence predict better academic and socio-cultural adaptation (Young et al., 2013; Wright & Schartner, 2013; Zhang & Goodson, 2011; Basow & Gaugler, 2017; Schutz & Richards, 2003) and general success (Zhang & Mi, 2010). A lack of English

proficiency, conversely, can lead to isolation and limited opportunities to make intercultural friendships (Yang et al., 2006; Paige, 1993; Poyrazli et al., 2004).

The study suggests that host language proficiency is important to the exchange of ideas and to establish social contacts, and hence it is necessary to develop one's intercultural awareness and IC. However, other studies suggest that while English is important to develop IC, intercultural knowledge and values are also significant (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2004). The overall findings indicated that students with better English language ability were more open-minded and tended to seek social interactions but their actual IC development could not be predicted by the quantitative data in this study. This resonates with the finding that higher levels of English skills can lead to higher levels of social interactions, which may result in higher levels of OM (Basow & Gaugler, 2017).

Moreover, considerations about English language were also brought up by many academic staff who tended to adjust their English to be more acceptable to all students as a response to the increasing number of international students. This shows the significant role that the host language plays in realising 'teaching for all' in order to achieve effective communication. This has been frequently addressed in definitions of IC, for example, in the most widely adopted definition of IC by Deardorff (2004), IC is described as 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (p.194). It is significant that both students and staff acknowledge the importance of English language ability in the development of IC.

### **6.3.3 Disciplinary variations**

With regard to disciplinary differences in students' IC, this study found that there was no significant difference in students' IC among the three disciplines at both T1 and T2. The only significant difference to be found was among students from Education and Engineering disciplines regarding the development of CE. The quantitative data suggested that students from Education had better CE mean scores than students from Engineering when they first arrived at the host university. There are two possible reasons to explain this. Firstly, female participants reported significantly higher mean scores for CE than male counterparts in this study, in accordance with Van der Zee et al. (2003). As Education participants were nearly 80% female and less than 15% of students from Engineering were female, this perhaps relates to why students from Education showed significantly higher CE scores than students from

Engineering. Secondly, drawing from the interview data, staff members from Education noted that many of the students have been, or want to become teachers, so they were more likely to be empathetic to difference.

#### **6.3.4 Summary**

To address the second research question – ‘How do pre-course factors affect students’ IC development?’, the study has discussed three important factors that impact an individual’s IC. This included prior overseas experience, English language ability and disciplinary variations. As IC is a complex concept and there are many factors that could potentially impact its development, few studies have been conducted to investigate these factors. Therefore, this section has discussed the pre-course factors in relation to IC development. The results have indicated that students who had prior overseas experience had higher mean scores for CE, SI and OM. Those who had relatively long-term prior overseas experiences tend to have higher levels of SI and OM in comparison to those who had short-term overseas experiences previously.

Furthermore, the study suggested that English language ability plays a significant role in developing an individual’s IC, perceived by both home and international students. Better English skills in particular, speaking and listening lead to higher levels of intercultural interactions and better communications both socially and academically, which may contribute to higher levels of SI and OM. However, the study found no significant difference between English language ability and the prediction of IC. One reason for this could be the development of IC can be an ongoing and lengthy process, meaning that a nine-month period of time may be too short for actual IC development. From academic staff perspectives, most of the participants from Education and Business were aware of the importance of using accessible English in class. However, staff from the Engineering school may need to be more aware of the role that the host language plays in their teaching in order to achieve effect intercultural communication and ‘teaching for all’ agenda in an internationalised environment. Moreover, the study found that the predominantly female participants from the Education discipline had significantly higher mean scores for CE than those of the predominantly male students from the Engineering discipline at T1. This could be related to two factors. Firstly, there were far more female students in the Education school and the assumption that females tend to be more empathetic than their male counterparts according to previous studies (Van der

Zee et al., 2003). It may also be because, as staff interviewees have stated, many Education students were or will be teachers and hence they tend to be more empathetic to differences. The study claimed that IC development requires an individual effort and a long-term commitment. Factors such as prior overseas experiences, prior intercultural experiences, host language proficiency, gender and programme of study can equally attribute to the development of one's IC to a great extent. Hence, these factors should be taken into consideration when future study in IC is undertaken.

## **6.4 In-course Factors on IC Development**

This section aims to address the third research question of this study: What are the in-course factors that arose from students' academic and socio-cultural experiences that facilitate or hinder their IC development? Four emerging themes from the interview data are discussed in relation to the quantitative data generated from the MPQ: social segregation (section 6.4.2), group work (section 6.4.3), stress (section 6.4.4), and general intercultural adaptation (section 6.4.5).

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

The quantitative data showed a decrease in mean scores for CE, SI, OM, and ES while an increase was found in mean score for FL of international students' IC after eight months of study. However, only OM and FL had statistically significant differences from T1 to T2. This result resonates with some earlier research suggesting that ES is relatively difficult to change in the short-term (e.g. Yakunina et al., 2011; Van Bakel et al., 2015) but other elements of IC can be trained and developed, such as OM and FL (Deardorff, 2006; Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003). Although personality has been regarded as relative stable, it may change over time if the environment has changed dramatically (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). However, no significant difference was found in home students' IC development.

This study found a mixed set of results in terms of students' OM development. As mentioned earlier, there was a significant decrease in the mean score for OM, but the interview data showed positive development. This mixed set of results is supported by different studies (e.g. Schartner, 2016; Young & Schartner, 2014; Van Bakel et al., 2015). For example, Young and Schartner's (2014) qualitative data indicated an increase in students' OM and self-confidence after nine months of

Master's study. Van Bakel et al. (2015) found that sojourners tend to become more open-minded and socially active when they receive good social support from local nationals. However, although the apparent decrease in OM was unexpected, Schartner's (2016) study using the MPQ indicated a similar decrease to that observed in this study. The present study offers two possible explanations for the drop in OM in order to address the third research question:

- Firstly, a lack of interaction and integration among student cohorts may lead to less open-minded individuals, which is further discussed in this section (section 6.4.2).
- Alternatively, mixed culture group work, intended as a means to reduce segregation, may have had the reverse effect on students' attitudes towards each other if they were 'forced' into mixed culture groups without positive guidance (section 6.4.3).

The findings suggest that international students had lower mean scores for SI than home students throughout the time span of the research. Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) also suggested that home students, in general, showed higher mean scores in the MPQ measurement than international students. Moreover, international students' FL increased over time. This result can relate to academic, psychological, and socio-cultural adaptation. The development of FL, following the U-curve model, describes students' intercultural adaptation, in line with the notion that FL can have a positive effect on students' academic, socio-cultural, and psychological adjustment as a stress-buffering trait for adaptation (Wang, 2009; Young & Schartner, 2014; van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2013; Taft, 1981). The suggestion that FL is a behavioural ability that can be trained is further discussed in section 6.4.4 and 6.4.5.

#### **6.4.2 Social segregation**

This section serves two purposes: firstly, it explores the possible reasons for social segregation among home and international student cohorts; secondly, it investigates the impact of social segregation on the decrease of sojourners' OM.

The study found that international students tended to experience a lack of local social contacts during their sojourn. The interview data showed that most of the

international participants felt excluded from the local community and had problems making friends with local students both in and out of class. Similar findings emerge from other research studies, suggesting that social interactions and friendships between local and international students are important and can be challenging (William & Johnson, 2011; Anderson, 2006). The result contrasts with study abroad research claiming that students tend to integrate and socialise automatically in a multicultural environment, which in turn contributes to the IC development (Vande Berg et al., 2012). The present study challenges the 'immersion assumption' and points to the need for interventions to bring international and home students together intentionally, diminishing the social segregation on campus and developing their IC as a learning outcome.

Many studies investigated the reasons why international students isolate themselves from host nationals (Trice, 2007; Gareis, 2012), however, little is known on either home or international students' perspectives on this issue. The study indicates that home and international students had different motivations to study and pursued different objectives during their stay in the host university and hence had different attitudes toward social contacts and social activities with people from other cultural groups. The findings suggest that international students' motivations were not only academically oriented but also socially and culturally oriented, such as 'seeking an international outlook and perspectives', 'experiencing living in another country', 'improving language skills' and 'pursuing a better education' in the host university. Having intercultural friendships is a way to learn about the culture and language for them. While for home students, especially young home students, academic achievement and employment enhancement were the main motivations to study a Master Degree. Based on these different motivations and purposes, international students, in general, were more motivated and interested in socialising with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds than their local counterparts. This is in line with Byram (1997), one of the first researchers to make a distinction between sojourners who are intrinsically and truly open to cultural differences and cultural tourists. Lantz-Deaton (2017) found that regarding intercultural learning as a means to achieve career goals is not the most effective way to develop IC. Rather understanding the benefits of being interculturally competent individuals through maximising engagement with intercultural experiences and learning opportunities through both formal and informal curriculum.

At the beginning of their studies, international students regarded friendships with home students as rewarding and beneficial, since they expected that such friendships would help to improve their English skills and develop an international outlook during their stay at the host university, although they anticipated that there might be language barriers and misunderstandings in communication. Most of the home students, on the other hand, regarded friendships with international students as 'effortful' and preferred not to make any extra effort in a conversation that may cause misunderstandings. This finding accords with some researchers (e.g. Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999; Harrison & Peacock, 2007) who identified language as a key factor that may hinder the establishment of intercultural friendships and thus impact on IC development<sup>51</sup>. As many of the home students studying at the host university were locals and had established friendship groups and family support, it was less desirable for them to make friends with international students. The present study found that establishing friendships in the new environment was not only the issue for international students, but also for home students who came from other parts of the UK or mature home students. Local home students may have little reason to build friendships with international students since they often have established relationships (McKenzie & Baldassar, 2017) and may not seek 'intercultural' interactions in this sense. The friendship between home and international students may be hard to establish naturally if the motivations for social exchange are not reciprocal. Social exchange theory explains 'human interaction is an exchange process' (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and individuals tend to seek relationships that are 'the most rewarding, the least costly, and the best value relative to other relationships' (Fitzpatrick, 1987, p.579). In this case, in order to establish intercultural friendships, it is likely that the international students will make more effort to initiate conversations and build friendships with home students as Peacock (2009) claimed that UK students may shy away from initiating conversations with international students, relying on international students to take the initiative.

This study contrasts with previous studies that focus on international students' social isolation on the home campus (Trice, 2007; Gareis, 2012). It argues that it is problematic to discuss social segregation only from the sojourners' perspective assuming that they are the ones who need to adapt and change (e.g.

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<sup>51</sup> English language ability was discussed in relation to IC and intercultural friendships in 6.3.2.

problematizing English language skills, academic workload, and cultural differences), while overlooking the important role that home students play in this process. The above discussion indicates that social segregation may exist when home and international students have different learning motivations and purposes and relationships are not seen to benefit both parties, who may live in parallel social worlds.

Findings indicate that social segregation among home and international student cohorts influenced their development of OM. As mentioned earlier, international students tended to have positive expectations about making local contacts to enrich their life in the host country at the beginning of their studies, whereas in fact, the lack of social integration during their sojourn resulted in a significant decrease in OM. This result is consistent with findings from a number of studies (Basow & Gaugler, 2017; Church, 1982; Kamal & Maruyama, 1990), suggesting that limited social contact can lead to negative attitudes towards host nationals and the host country and therefore to lower levels of OM. Some studies also reported that a lack of local contacts can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and stress, resulting in negative intercultural interactions (Chen 1999; Hull, 1978; Glass & Westmont, 2014).

However, it is worth noting that those participants who felt that it was difficult to make local friends managed to make international friendships and noted that international friendships helped them to become more open-minded. This aligns with findings from a number of studies indicating the importance of co-national and non-co-national friendships to adaptation and stress reduction at the host country (Glass, 2012; Glass & Westmont, 2014). On the other hand, some studies have indicated that friendships with non-co-nationals can lead to stress (Maundeni, 2001). The present study, therefore, does not claim conclusive evidence and suggests that this issue should be investigated further in future studies. Moreover, international students', especially Asian students' experiences of discrimination outside of the campus may have contributed to a sense of exclusion, lack of belonging in the local community, and hence to less open-minded attitudes towards the local culture. This finding is in line with some research addressing the issue of discrimination experienced by international students (Lee, 2009; Lee & Rice, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), which can cause a decrease in OM.

In sum, based on the argument that home and international students are likely to have different motivations, social exchange theory explains why home and



international students may segregate from each other. Home students may regard intercultural contacts as less rewarding and more costly than international students. When two groups fail to value social exchange and interaction, segregation can contribute to the decrease in international students' OM. The classroom is an important place where academic staff can encourage and facilitate students to establish intercultural friendships (Kudo & Simkin, 2003; Stier, 2006; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011), encourage multicultural group work and foster students' intercultural learning (De Vita, 2005).

#### **6.4.3 Multicultural group work**

This study found that while mixed culture group work can be beneficial for establishing students' intercultural friendships and reduce cultural stereotypes, it can also contribute to negative feelings towards each other and less OM at the end of the sojourn. Most of the international participants reported experiencing feelings of exclusion and neglect in working with home students while home students mentioned issues such as communication problems and unequal commitment to group work. Similar results have been reported by a number of studies: students may think negatively about intercultural group work, especially when the assignment is of high stakes (Carroll & Li, 2008), which can cause anxiety (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002; Summers & Volet, 2008). Allport's (1954) 'contact theory' can help to explain why group work is negatively perceived by students; Allport's theory proposed that under certain conditions, active, positive, and purposeful interactions with people from different cultures can reduce intergroup prejudice and anxiety, therefore enhancing mutual understanding and tolerance (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Denson & Zhang, 2010). However, negative intergroup contact can cause prejudice if people feel threatened when working in situations where they did not choose to have the contact (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Summers and Volet (2008), Haneda (2014), and Lantz-Deaton (2017) also suggested that involuntary contact in group work can lead to negative outcomes such as intergroup anxiety and prejudice.

It is interesting to note that in this study, although in general international students' OM decreased from T1 to T2, a significant drop in mean scores for OM was reported by participants from the Engineering discipline. The interview data revealed that Engineering students reported less pleasant experiences of mixed culture group work than students from other disciplines. However, in the Business discipline where group work was also an important mode of assessment, students reported fewer

unpleasant experiences in mixed culture group work than those of Engineering. This might be because international students were the largest student group in Business while home students can be the dominant group in the researched Engineering programmes. Therefore, international students of Business had more opportunities to work with their co-nationals or other international students, while international students of Engineering were likely to work with home students. Previous studies have suggested that international students felt more comfortable and confident to work with co-nationals but working with home students can make them feel anxious (Volet & Ang, 2012; Greenland & Brown, 2005), as was found to be the case with Engineering students. Zimitat (2008) also reported that international students were more positive towards mixed culture group work than home students because the former can achieve their personal goal such as international exposure and experiences by interacting with the latter.

From the interview data, students reported that when working with co-nationals, they felt a sense of belonging, bonding, and familiarity. Group work was less stressful because they shared the same language and culture. This was supported by a number of studies (e.g. Volet & Ang, 2012; Woolf, 2007; Glass, 2012; Glass & Westmont, 2014; Kim, 2001; Sherry et al., 2010), suggesting that co-national peer groups provide emotional support, a sense of identity, a common language, and a common study strategy. However, this study also suggests that working in co-national groups prevented students from learning the host culture and language, other ways of thinking and dealing with things, and intercultural skills. It confirms the notion that although working in a mixed culture group can be difficult, both home and international students believed that it is an effective way to develop IC compared with working with co-nationals. Some students also reported that they gained a lot of cultural knowledge by working with people from different cultural backgrounds, which can benefit them in many ways. Many studies have suggested that group assignments are an effective way to increase intercultural interactions between home and international students since segregation between the two groups has become an increasing concern (e.g. Yefanova, Baird, & Montgomery, 2015; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005; Glass & Westmont, 2014). Nevertheless, although students recognised the importance of mixed culture group work as a means to develop IC, they preferred to work with co-nationals. Students' attitudes demonstrated the challenges to achieving one of the main purposes of internationalising HE through the curriculum, and that is to prepare students 'to function in an international and intercultural context in the

future' (Knight & de Wit, 1995, p.13). Volet and Ang raised this issue in 1998, and it remains a challenge two decades later.

Findings indicate that mixed culture group should be continuously encouraged for its intercultural benefits, and staff support was important to help students to overcome anxiety and to make this experience more positive. Montgomery (2009) also reported that interaction in group work with other nationalities is important and it provides an opportunity for students' personal and professional development. Whereas in Montgomery's research, low-stakes assessment environments were emphasised and promoted, the present study involved high stakes group work as the commonly adopted assessment method. The learning and assessment environment can greatly impact student perceptions of intercultural learning. Zimitat (2008) also found a positive correlation between intercultural group work and IC development, emphasising that this requires staff support and guidance to lead to meaningful interactions among home and international students.

In contrast to the quantitative data on OM development, interview data showed that those who felt excluded and segregated in group projects with home students also perceived themselves to be open-minded after a period of time. In line with previous studies (e.g. Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Campbell, 2012; Ippolito, 2007) it is proposed that when students had positive intercultural experiences, the actual development of IC is unlikely to be evident within nine months since this requires an ongoing and lengthy process. Intercultural experience may not necessarily lead to IC development as a matter of course. IC is a complex concept which depends on '...quality of the contact experience, the context in which it takes place, and the frequency and extensiveness of contact relationship' (Brewer, 2003, p. 108). When students perceive that they have become more open-minded and tolerant towards other cultures and people, this does not necessarily indicate that they have developed IC during their sojourn.

In summary, the study found that being in a multicultural learning environment may not enhance students' OM depending on the nature and quantity of interactions between home and international student groups. Non-voluntary intergroup contact can have negative effects, causing anxiety and possible prejudice, as found in the Engineering discipline, where group work was a main form of assessment. This result contrasts with some earlier research where students thought that group discussion was helpful for their learning and learning outcomes. In a

mixed-method study by Gu, Schweisfurth, and Day (2010) international students were found to have more positive attitudes towards local people and to be more accepting of people with different values after studying at the host university. The study by Gu et al. was conducted over a longer 15-month period with first-year undergraduate students. The present study went beyond the study of group discussion in association with students' intercultural experiences, to look at high stakes group assignment and also investigated home students' attitudes. A salient feature of the current study was the use of the MPQ to measure students' actual IC development associated with the discussion of students' intercultural experiences as an indicator of internationalisation, rather than discussing intercultural experience itself. The results indicate need to consider how group work can be effectively used to contribute to a more positive and rewarding experience for all students' IC development. Although group work can promote the idea that students' success is interdependent and long-term relationships can be built during the process, without positive guidance both international and home student cohorts can experience negative feelings about each other in mixed cultural group working environments, impacting on IC development in the longer term.

#### **6.4.4 Learning stress and homesickness**

In response to the third research question, this section aims to discuss the following two issues:

- International students have lower mean scores for SI than home students: possible reasons.
- International students experience an increase in FL during their sojourn: possible reasons.

This study found that home students' SI was significantly higher than international students' throughout the sojourn. However, a significant increase in FL after nine months was found among international students. Compared with home students, international students' relatively low mean score for SI and positive development of FL during the sojourn were associated with students' psychological and socio-cultural adjustment, which accords with a number of other studies (e.g. Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003; Van Oudenhoven et al., 2003; Basow & Gaugler, 2017). Regarding their psychological wellbeing, findings show that international students tended to experience a level of distress and anxiety during their sojourn. This feeling

may have been caused by their studies (academic stress), adapting to an unfamiliar learning environment and learning style, and to the use of English as the language of instruction. Although home students also needed to adapt to the new environment, international students appeared to experience more adaptation problems, such as culture shock and language concerns. This concurs with previous findings indicating that learning in a foreign language and experiencing culture shock can lead to stress (Ward, Bochner, & Rurnham, 2001), which may affect sojourners' general adaptation (Lantz-Deaton, 2017). Interview data showed that a few international students felt reluctant to be distracted by social activities and experiencing the local culture due to study workload and pressure. They tended to focus on their studies most of the time, illustrating that academic pressure may inhibit intercultural and social learning for some students. This result indicates that international students, in general, experienced more academic, psychological, and socio-cultural adaptation problems than home students, resulting in international students' lower SI scores.

Another issue that was frequently raised by international students was homesickness, which had a negative effect on their socio-cultural and psychological adjustment. Other studies have found that homesickness can result in negative feelings and adjustment difficulties (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Shin & Abel, 1999), which can be reflected in generating anxiety towards social events and activities (Messina, 2007). Furthermore, as discussed in section 6.4.2, the social segregation that international students experienced can lead to lower levels of SI than home students. Being far away from home and their previous social networks, it may be more difficult for international students to establish new friendships than locals who already have their social networks. Moreover, international students presented as more passive and less confident than home students to initiate or maintain conversations in different and unfamiliar cultural environments, in line with Zimitat (2008). Earlier research (e.g. Black & Gregersen, 1999; Tananuraksakul & Hall, 2011), suggested a positive association between SI and the ability to establish networks and friendships. This result demonstrates that homesickness that international students experienced could lead to a lower score for SI than home students.

In addition, the differences in ratings between home and international students for SI may also reflect the influence of cultures on scale scores (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Most of the international participants in this study came from East Asian countries and research has suggested that people from these

countries tend to underestimate themselves in self-rating surveys (Heine et al., 1999). They are less inclined to describe themselves in a self-enhancing way but instead reflect themselves in lower scores (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Further research could focus on comparisons between different ethnicities on IC rating.

The above discussion explored the possible psychological (stress and homesickness) and socio-cultural (social segregation, friendships, and cultural differences on rating behaviour) reasons why international students had significantly lower mean scores for SI than home students. Drawing from the interviews, both international and home students expressed that although there were difficulties in this new journey, they saw it as a challenge rather than a threat. As Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) proposed, for individuals who rated highly on SI, their personality can contribute to positive responses in diverse environments, but only in the absence of threat. This could explain why home students had a higher score for SI than international students, although both cohorts had relatively high, above mid-point, ratings.

#### **6.4.5 Intercultural adaptation**

This section discusses international students' increased FL with their academic and socio-cultural adaptation in association with the U-curve pattern. It is important to note that although students' FL increased from T1 to T2, even at T1, the mean score for FL was high i.e. above mid-point ratings.

The study suggests that international students' development of FL was associated with their general adaptation. At the beginning of the sojourn, although they reported some adaptation difficulties, such as homesickness, language issues, and culture shock, in general, international students tended to have positive attitudes towards their new environment and the challenges ahead. This may explain why international students' FL at T1 was lower than at T2 but both were relatively high, in line with the results of a previous study on the 'honeymoon' stage of sojourner's adaptation (Young & Schartner, 2014). The result suggests that although international students experienced adaptation problems (i.e. homesickness, adapting to new learning environment, and language concern) throughout their stay, they tended to experience feelings of excitement at the beginning of their sojourn. This helps explain why, although international students' FL was relatively lower at T1, it remained above mid-ratings.

After four months of study, international students began to see their adaptation as threatening, which created a strong sense of anxiety and negative emotions. This can be attributed to the following reasons: firstly, international students had high academic expectations of themselves at the beginning of their academic year, but when their learning results did not meet with their expectations, it resulted in a considerable decrease in self-confidence and academic self-esteem. Secondly, international students tended to see their first assignment as difficult and challenging since most of them had not experienced UK education before, and they were unfamiliar with UK academic standards. Thirdly, international students failed to achieve what they wanted to achieve from their social and cultural experiences, including establishing friendships with home students and integrating into the local community. Fourthly, international students tended to be coping with emotional challenges, such as homesickness. Moreover, international students often reported financial and family pressures that contributed to their stress. Some of these factors influencing international students' adaptation have been raised by previous studies (Wang et al., 2015; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Mesidor & Sly, 2016). However, this study was one of the few studies that observed and compared the adjustment process at three different stages throughout one-year master students' studies. This study suggests that in the fourth month, students reached the lowest point in terms of adjustment. This finding contrasts with previous studies that suggest the most challenging period tends to occur in the early stage of the sojourn when coping resources (i.e. social support) tend to be limited while life changes are greatest (Ward et al., 2001).

However, this situation changed nine months into their studies when they were better adapted, more confident, and more familiar with the learning environment. Drawing on the quantitative data, the study found an increased mean score for international students' FL. This aligns with findings from van der Zee and van Oudenhoven (2013) who indicated that higher scores on adaptation factors such as FL led to more positive effects in responding to stressful intercultural situations. Findings from the qualitative data indicate that students felt more confident in themselves after nine months with regard to their English language ability in academic and social activities, dealing with things more independently, and adapting to the local culture. This accords with some research (e.g. Wang et al., 2012; Campbell, 2010), suggesting that when students experienced less culture shock and pressure after a period of time, they began to demonstrate increased ability to learn

from cultural experiences and adjusted more easily to the new environment. In general, the development of FL from T1 to T2 followed the pattern of the U-curve model, from a less adapted situation at the beginning of the sojourn to a greater adaptation at the end.

However, the results contrast with early research that rejected the popular U-curve pattern of adjustment. Ward et al. (1998) found that student adjustment difficulties decreased in the first four months, with no significant further change at 6 and 12 months. The difference between the Ward et al. study and my study was that in her study, four adjustment questionnaires were administered over one year with undergraduate Japanese students studying in the New Zealand context, while my study used the MPQ and interview data to monitor master students' adjustment over nine months in the UK context. Several recent studies also contest the U-curve pattern of adjustment for first-year undergraduate students (e.g. Hirai, Frazier, & Syed, 2015) or postgraduate students (e.g. Chien, 2016). It may be interesting for future studies to investigate students' IC with the MPQ at the mid-point of their sojourn and monitor the adaptation pattern with quantitative data collected at three stages.

#### **6.4.6 Summary**

Regarding the third research question – 'What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development?', this study explored the factors from students' sociocultural and academic experiences in relation to IC development. The study suggested that social segregation among home and international students may be a common phenomenon in an 'internationalised' university and this could lead to the decrease in international students' OM over time. In general, home and international students had very different learning motives and purposes to study a Master Degree at the host university. Home students were highlighted as socially capable as they had already built a social circle. They were also in comparison more academic and career driven. International students pursued an international and intercultural outlook alongside their academic achievement. This fundamental difference determined their choices in making social contacts and attending social activities. Their friendships cannot be established if the social exchange between the two parties is not reciprocal.



This study further suggested that the classroom might be a better place to encourage students to establish intercultural relationships. Mixed culture group work has been widely adopted in Business and Engineering classes. Although students claimed that they have become more open-minded and empathetic after working with people from different cultural backgrounds, they also encountered many challenges. These unpleasant experiences may contribute to the significant drop in OM showed by the quantitative data in the Engineering school in particular. Most of the international participants reported experiencing feelings of exclusion while working with home students while the latter mentioned issues such as communication problems and unequal commitment to group work. These problems can be exacerbated when the assignment is of high stakes and it explains why Engineering students perceived a significant decrease in OM. It may well be that the support of academic tutors as 'mediators' (e.g. Boylan and Smith, 2012) could help students overcome anxiety and to make group work a more positive experience, leading to more meaningful interactions between 'home' and 'international' students (Zimitat, 2008).

In general, students' intercultural adaptation followed the pattern of the U-curve model, from less adapted at the beginning to a greater adaptation at the end. At T1, international students tended to experience adaptation problems such as homesickness, language barriers, adapting to education system and cultural shock while home students reported problems such as moving to a new place, looking for accommodation, far away from their families, and working in a multicultural environment. International students in general experienced more issues when trying to adapt to the new environment in comparison to the home students. However, both groups were equally uncertain in regard to working in a multicultural environment and what that may bring.

Despite all the concerns, students held positive attitudes towards their new environment and the challenges ahead. After four months at T2, students began to see the new learning environment as challenging and threatening due to increasing learning stress and adaptation problems. This leads to a significant rise in feelings of distress whilst reaching the lowest point for intercultural adaptation. Nevertheless, this situation changed at the end of their studies at T3. Students adapted and became more confident both on an academically and sociocultural level. Institutional interventions may be needed to enhance students' adaptation and experiences especially in the first semester of their Master studies, such as providing multicultural

programmes at an early stage to all students and providing relevant services to students who are encountering various adaptation problems.

## **6.5 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter firstly discussed staff and students' perceptions of the university's internationalisation agenda with two main themes: IoC and students' intercultural experiences. Although most staff and students were aware of the importance of international dimensions of the curriculum as well as students' internationalised experiences, few disciplinary differences in their understandings of internationalisation and intercultural competence were found among Business, Education, and Engineering disciplines. It then moved onto the discussion of pre-course and in-course factors in students' IC development. The results showed significant differences between students who had prior overseas experiences and those who had not in relation to their IC development. Although prior overseas experience may have occurred overseas, equally valuable intercultural experiences can occur without mobility and it is worth considering in future studies, for example through IaH at an undergraduate level, through living in a multicultural environment, or through education on intercultural awareness and knowledge. Regarding the in-course factors, emerging themes such as social segregation, multicultural group work, learning stress, and intercultural adaptation were discussed as the main findings in this study.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This final chapter highlights the main findings of this study and attempts to address the research questions (section 7.2). Methodological and conceptual contributions towards the field of IoHE are presented (section 7.3). Several research limitations are discussed with possible future research directions (section 7.4). The chapter concludes with practical implications for universities, staff, and prospective students (section 7.5), followed by some personal reflections on the process of conducting this research study (section 7.6).

### 7.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

#### 7.2.1 *Research question 1*

RQ1: How are internationalisation and intercultural competence understood by staff and students across different disciplines within the host university, and are there differences between these understandings?

The findings suggest that academic staff generally view internationalisation as 'teaching for all', 'international research collaborations', and 'student positive experiences' (see 6.2.1). As the most frequently discussed element – 'teaching for all', internationalisation was understood as curriculum internationalisation that includes an international dimension in teaching. This is in alignment with Knight (2008) and Beelen and Jones (2015) who suggest that internationalisation means integrating international and intercultural elements into the curriculum for students who study on the home campus. This was reflected in the three disciplines researched in this study, including Business, Engineering, and Education. Staff from these disciplines demonstrated positive attitudes towards having international elements in their teaching and were aware that internationalisation is changing their ways of teaching. This is inconsistent with findings that suggest staff from 'soft' and 'hard' disciplines have different attitudes in terms of internationalised curriculum (e.g. Zimitat, 2008; Swair, 2013). Instead, staff from 'applied' disciplines in general were well engaged with internationalisation.

As one of the most important indicators of internationalisation, 'student positive experience' was raised by many academic staff. As part of the student

experience, the findings specifically show that staff from different disciplines had different attitudes towards the types of graduates they aimed to produce as the outcome of internationalisation. Staff in the Engineering discipline reported the development of students' employability skills while staff from Education claimed the importance of students' development of intercultural awareness and OM. This can be explained by the notion proposed by Braxton (1995) who claimed that academic staff from 'hard applied' disciplines (Engineering) value graduates' career skills while staff from 'soft applied' disciplines (Education) aim to develop students' characters that go beyond the employability skill-set. Although the study shows that staff from different disciplines had different foci in understanding internationalisation, they all acknowledged the importance of internationalisation and that it brought changes to their teaching. This suggests that staff were aware of the importance of developing 'graduates who are more internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled, and prepared to live and work in more culturally diverse communities' (Knight, 2013, p.5).

Students, on the other hand, pointed out two main elements in understanding internationalisation: curriculum and learning environment (see 6.2.2). Similar to staff, students addressed the importance of including international elements in the teaching content. Students from different disciplines showed their interest and satisfaction in learning from a global context. Contrary to staff, students reported the multicultural learning environment as an essential element in understanding and implementing internationalisation in the beginning stages of their studies. Although for some programmes, diversity within student cohorts is limited, most of the students believed that the host university's environment is multicultural. However, there was a marked change over time. At the end of their programmes, students reported that internationalisation should not only be understood as a diverse population, but also as positive social integration among different ethnicities.

### **7.2.2 Research question 2**

RQ2: How do pre-course factors affect students' IC development during the one-year Masters?

This study suggests that students' prior overseas experiences had a significant positive effect on CE, SI, and OM (see 6.3.1). This result could be explained by

Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis' indicating that intergroup interaction likely reduces intergroup anxiety and prejudice, suggesting that prior intercultural and international experiences can prepare individuals to be more open-minded about others because they had experienced similar situation previously. In addition, this study further suggests that students with long-term prior overseas experiences were more likely to be interested and confident in approaching social activities, and to be more open-minded to other people who are culturally and linguistically different from them than those who had short-term travelling or business prior overseas experiences.

With regard to students' English language ability<sup>52</sup>, this study suggests that international students significantly improved their writing, listening, and speaking skills during their sojourn, although they still had problems in understanding locals and experienced a lack of interaction with them (see 6.3.2). Furthermore, the quantitative findings suggest that students' English proficiency correlated with their IC. More specifically, speaking and listening abilities were positively correlated to students' SI and OM. Supported by interview data, this means that individuals who had better listening and speaking skills were more likely to be involved in intercultural activities and therefore possibly became more open-minded and vice versa. However, students' English language ability was not predictive of IC development in this study.

Students from the Education discipline scored significantly higher in CE than students from the Engineering discipline at the beginning of their studies (see 6.3.3). This may be attributed to two possible reasons: firstly, possible gender differences may have contributed to the result. This result was supported by both quantitative and qualitative data in this study. Secondly, given the nature of the Education programme, students who study Education were either already or were working to become teachers, so they were more likely to be empathetic towards differences. As one of the staff members reflected about their students (who were teachers): 'teachers readily respond to the sorts of messages and encouragement, and they tend to be open-minded and those teachers who are not open-minded, probably not gonna come and do HE courses'.

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<sup>52</sup> English language ability was discussed in research question 2 as a pre-course factor to investigate the correlation between English ability and IC, however it can also be discussed as an in-course factor investigating sojourners' development of English language ability.

### **7.2.3 Research question 3**

RQ3: What are the in-course factors that facilitated or hindered students' IC development?

A mixed result was found regarding students' OM development. The quantitative results showed a significant decrease for OM from T1 to T2, while the qualitative results indicated a positive development (see 6.4.1). This illustrated that students' intercultural experiences may not necessarily lead to their OM development. In this study, students reported that they became more open-minded due to their intercultural experiences, but this does not necessarily mean that their OM was in fact enhanced to a measurable degree since IC development can be an ongoing and lengthy process. Regarding the significant decrease in OM, this study suggests the following reasons: firstly, international students experienced a lack of interaction and integration with home students which could contribute to a less open-minded individual in a long term. This could also be explained by their different learning motivations based on the self-determination and social exchange theories (see 6.4.2). Secondly, although mixed culture group work can be beneficial for reducing cultural stereotypes and establish intercultural friendships, it can also result in a reversed effect on students' OM if 'forced' mixed culture groups were encouraged without any positive guidance from staff, which can be linked to the notion of 'negative intergroup contact' (see 6.4.3). This result puts forward a need to reconsider how mixed-culture group work can be utilised effectively by staff in the class.

Furthermore, this study found that international students tended to score lower mean scores for SI than home students throughout the sojourn, possibly because the former experienced a higher level of stress and anxiety, generally caused by their academic, psychological, and socio-cultural adaptation (see 6.4.4). Drawing from interview data, adaptation problems may include academic stress, unfamiliar learning environment, language barriers, culture shock, homesickness, and social segregation. The findings also suggest that academic stress, to a larger extent, can prevent students from culture learning and social participation (see 6.4.4).

In addition to OM and SI, international students' FL increased significantly during one-year master's study but both the mean scores for FL at T1 and T2 were

above mid-point ratings (see 6.4.5). This study suggests the increase of FL was possibly associated with students' general adaptation and follows the U-curve pattern, which can be mirrored by the qualitative data. This result is supported by some researchers (e.g. Wang, 2009; Schartner, 2014) who regard FL as a stress-buffering trait for cross-cultural adaptation. At the beginning of student sojourn, although international students reported some difficulties, they continued to show positive attitudes and excitement towards the life in the host country. After four months into their studies, they began to see the new learning environment as challenging and threatening due to increasing learning stress and adaptation problems, which led to the highest level of anxiety and distress and reached the lowest point for intercultural adaptation. However, this situation changed at the end of their studies, international students became more adapted and more confident in themselves, and hence an increase of FL could be observed. This was reflected in the way that they became more confident in using their English in both academic and social contexts, and their growing confidence and independence in dealing with everyday life in the host country.

### **7.3 Contribution of this Study**

Methodologically, this research study employed a longitudinal mixed-methods research approach, including quantitative and qualitative elements to investigate students' IC development as a learning outcome of internationalisation. This approach has been adopted by only a relatively small number of researchers in studying student sojourner adjustment (e.g. Zhou & Todman, 2009; Young et al., 2013). However, by employing this approach, rather than measuring students' intercultural adaptation, the study emphasised the importance of exploring students' intercultural experiences (qualitative approach) and their contribution to their IC development (quantitative approach). This dual focus has rarely been employed to investigate students' IC development in either intercultural studies or internationalisation of HE studies (e.g. Zhou and Todman, 2009). This was one of the few research projects to date studying IC in the context of HE internationalisation (institution, curriculum, and people) by using the pre- and post- MPQ survey to evaluate IC development and using the three-wave interviews to provide rich data on students' intercultural and international experiences that include both academic and socio-cultural perspectives. It is worth noting that the present study had a monitoring

as well as an outcome-focused 'measurable' component, allowing it to represent a useful methodological 'toolkit' for other researchers in the future.

Conceptually, this study developed an integrated model combining two broad and usually separate concepts: IC development and IoHE to enhance the understanding of IC as an outcome of internationalisation (see Figure 11). The figure indicates how students' experiences in an internationalised HE context may enhance or inhibit the development of IC. The model was developed to help guide an explanation of how internationalised an institution is through the perceptions and experiences of students and staff. This represented a shift in understanding IoHE, from purely focusing on international opportunities including internationalised curriculum at the home campus or sojourners' international experiences abroad, to looking more at learning outcomes (e.g. IC in the context of this study) that can equip graduates with intercultural skills to work and live in an increasingly interconnected world. This conceptual model illustrates the association between IoHE (see Chapter 2) and students' IC development (see Chapter 3). This integrated study combined both HE internationalisation studies (macro-level) and students' cross-cultural adaptation studies (micro-level) in order to illustrate students' IC development more comprehensively. At a macro-level, IC is understood from the perspective of IaH and IoC while at a micro-level, IC is perceived from students' academic and socio-cultural experiences during the study sojourn. In addition, IoHE was understood from three intertwined aspects in this study: institution's internationalisation strategy (section 2.3), IoC (section 2.4), and internationalised self (section 2.5) (HEA, 2014).

Furthermore, IC development was approached through students' intercultural experiences at the host university from their academic and socio-cultural experiences (in-course factors) (section 3.5), as well as their pre-course factors (section 3.4).



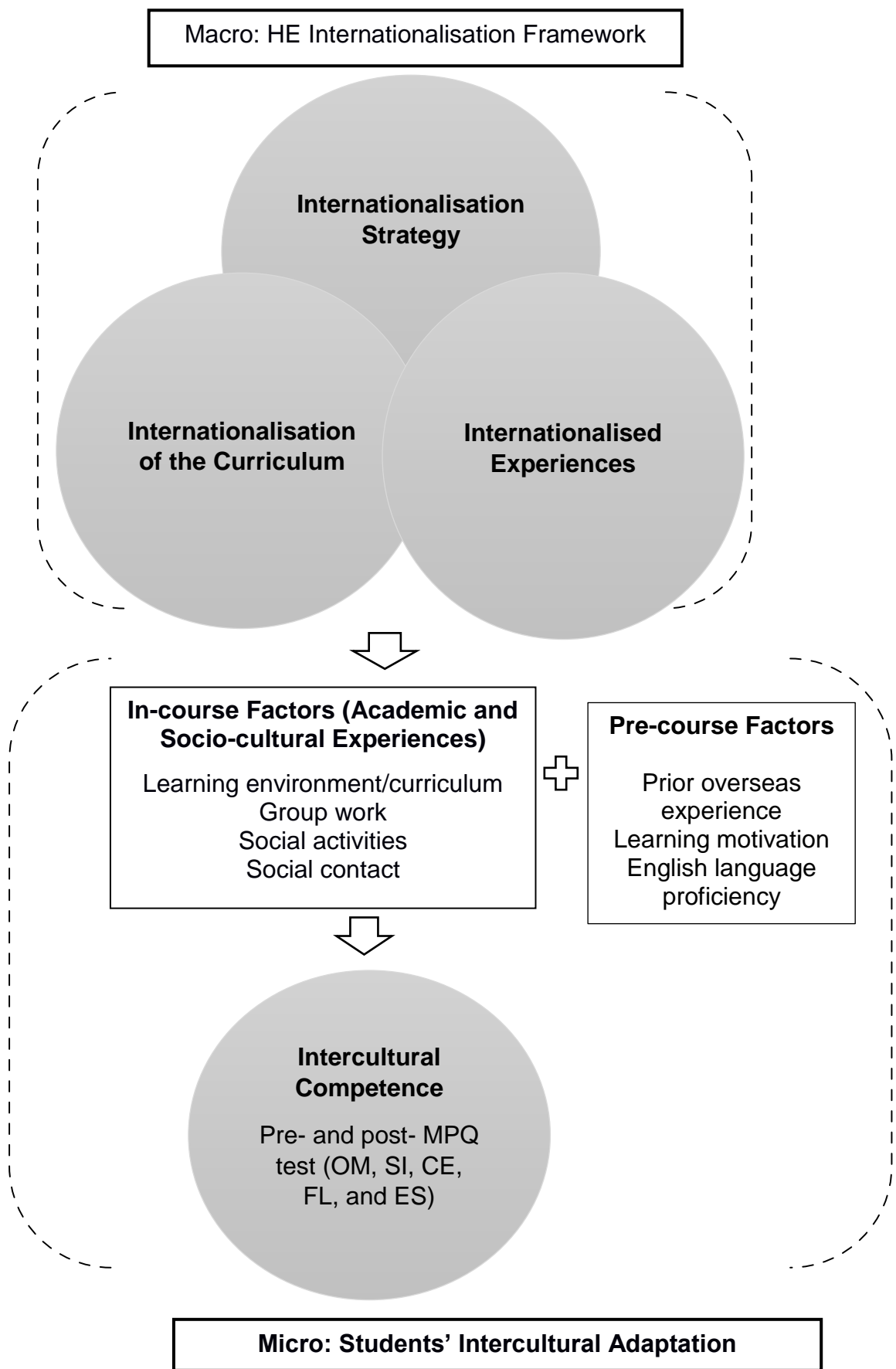


Figure 11 The Conceptual Framework Developed for this Study

#### **7.4 Limitations and Future Work**

This study has several limitations, and these limitations provide possible directions for future research work. Firstly, the participants of this study were one-year taught postgraduate students in a university located in the North of England, therefore their experiences may be different to undergraduate or postgraduate research students. It might be worth conducting future research with different student cohorts, such as undergraduate students or PhD students who tend to stay longer in the host university. Comparative studies among different student cohorts in terms of their IC development may be of interest because the nature of an academic sojourn may impact differently on contributory factors and IC outcomes (Young et al., 2013).

Secondly, further study could compare IC development using a control group, where students study in their home country and an experimental group where students study abroad on an exchange programme for a period of time (e.g. one term). Thirdly, as this study was only conducted in the UK, comparative studies across different countries could usefully be conducted to ascertain the impact of host country environments. Crucially, universities' education systems and internationalisation strategies may differ from country to country. Other contributory factors such as the extent to which the learning environment and curriculum have been internationalised and the extent to which the student population is multicultural may vary. Fourthly, in terms of the experimental design, it would be optimal to include another administration of the MPQ, which is at the end of the first term (mid-sojourn). From the interview data, four months into the sojourn appear to be a crucial low point in students' experiences, hence a further MPQ could provide more nuanced and fine-grained data about this important phase.

#### **7.5 Implications for Universities, Staff, and Students**

Conceptually, the model (see Figure 11) offers an integrated approach to study students' IC development as a learning outcome of internationalisation. This model contributes to a new understanding of HE internationalisation by combining both macro level of internationalisation study (internationalisation strategy, IoC, and internationalised experience) and micro level of individuals' intercultural adaptation (pre-course and in-course contributory factors). On a practical level, this model could be used as a reference framework or guidance document for HE practitioners as well as prospective students. It also provides a framework for policy makers who

endeavour to make internationalisation 'measurable' in HE context, with a view to seeking qualitative improvements.

The findings indicate that understandings of internationalisation should take account that student and staff perceive it through different lenses based on their different intercultural experiences, voices and perspectives. This offers HE stakeholders an opportunity to include students' international experiences and their IC development as an important part of the university's internationalisation strategy. Furthermore, the findings of this research project provide insights for academic staff to rethink their curriculum content and assessment design in developing students' IC. Mixed culture group work is common in many classes - especially in the Business and Engineering schools, however, this form of assessment was perceived as 'negative intergroup contact' by most home and international student cohorts. Without positive guidance, mixed group activities can cause a reverse effect on student OM development. This study suggests some possible solutions for minimising 'negative intergroup contact' that was generated by mixed culture group work. For example, low-stakes group projects could be introduced to assess students' learning outcomes. In that way, both home and international students can be encouraged to work in mixed culture groups without too much academic pressure. The staff could also consider incorporating applications of academic knowledge in a global context in their assessment in order to encourage more voluntary cultural exchange and collaboration among students from different cultural groups. Moreover, modules such as intercultural awareness or cross-culture communication could be embedded in teaching in all schools to raise staff and students' awareness, with opportunities for skill development.

This study also provided an in-depth inquiry into home and international students' intercultural adaptation process when they study one-year masters at the host university. The differences in learning motivations, interests in attending social activities, and attitudes towards intercultural social contacts among home and international students could help institutions and staff to better understand their different student cohorts in order to achieve a 'learning for all' agenda. In addition to institutions and staff, the findings can also be beneficial for students who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to advance their IC while studying together. This may aid increased levels of understanding between students of different cultures, and home students/staff, which may contribute towards reduced

levels of segregation on home campuses in the future. Last but not least, since international students reported that the first semester was the most challenging period during their sojourn, providing international students with more social support during this period of time seems crucial.

## **7.6 Concluding Remarks**

Internationalisation has brought changes to all walks of life in the past few decades, from the economy to the education sector. The international outlook which can include the number of international students and staff as well as international research collaborations, is seen as an important indicator for internationalised institutions that are seeking to improve their international standing and position in world university rankings. However, IC as the learning outcome of internationalisation and one of the important graduate attributes has been rarely measured and insufficiently valued by HEIs. This four-year opportunity enabled me to investigate this popular term 'internationalisation of higher education' from a more academic perspective, and to understand and promote the inclusion of staff and students' perceptions and experiences in the discussion of internationalisation. This study further points out some of the challenges and opportunities for intercultural learning in an internationalised higher education institution from both academic and sociocultural perspectives.

The most important qualities that I have learnt from this PhD journey is to recognise and correctly foster curiosity in order to channel it into academic research. In doing so I have been able to find out the mechanism behind the phenomena, the ability to critically engage with existing knowledge and to push the boundaries of science, while maintaining an open-mindedness towards differences and empathetically engaging with other viewpoints. This experience not only equipped me with a skill-set suitable for deploying credible research, it also provided me with the opportunity to consistently seek wisdom in myself and in the journey of my life. No matter what I do in the future, these qualities will remain with me in every decision I will make and for any work I might do. Although I am now approaching the end of my PhD study, it is just the beginning of this new chapter in my life in pursuing knowledge. I would like to conclude this thesis to reiterate the importance of 'an internationalised self' - 'only when we have clearly defined our own person and identity are we able to understand other identities' (Breuer, 2002, p. 15).

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## **Appendix A: Information sheet**

Information Sheet (degree program director)

I am conducting the research as a PhD student in the School of Education, Communication and Language Science (ECLS). The study has been approved by Newcastle University.

I am sending this information sheet to ask for your permission to let me recruit one-year Masters students (2016/2017) from your program to take part in my current research. It would be very helpful if you could give me some time to conduct a self-report survey with students during the induction week (Oct/2016) and also at the time when the taught element of the program ends (June/2017). The questionnaire will only take about maximum 10 minutes to complete but I would like to have another 10 minutes to generally introduce the questionnaire to students first and collect the questionnaire at the end.

Apart from the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview is also part of my research method that I have adopted. Therefore I would like to take the chance to get your permission for allowing me to recruit both students and staff participants from your program and if it is possible, could you please help me to pass this information to staff and students in your program? Before you decide whether or not to take part, please take some time to read the following information.

### **Research Topic**

This PhD project is about Postgraduate Students' Development of Intercultural Competence. This is part of an investigation into Newcastle University's internationalisation strategy.

The purpose of the research is to explore and compare students' development of intercultural competence during the one-year Master studies across three disciplines and secondly, to investigate how the curriculum has changed students' perceptions towards their understanding of intercultural competence. The students' voice are therefore particularly important in my study.

Here are three research questions that have been developed:

1. Do students develop IC during one-year Masters study in the disciplines of Engineering, Business and Education?
2. Do students perceive intercultural competence to be important?
3. Do staff perceive internationalisation and the development of students' intercultural competence to be important?

**Contact Details**

If you are interested in this study or need any further information please contact me by email ([y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk)).

**Thank you very much for your participation!**

23/05/2016

## **Information sheet (staff)**

I am sending this information sheet to invite you to take part in my current research study. It will be a 40-45 minutes face to face semi-structured interview and your views are very important to the study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, please take some time to read the following information.

### **Research Topic**

Currently, I am a second year PhD student and the project I am doing is about Postgraduate Students' Development of Intercultural Competence. This is part of an investigation into Newcastle University's internationalisation agenda.

The study aims to measure and evaluate the change and development of intercultural competence among home and international Masters students, in Engineering, Business and Education disciplines in Newcastle University. Secondly, the objective would be to compare and analyse differences among students' perceptions on the impact of curriculum, co-curriculum, and culture in their discipline and its effect on the development of intercultural competence.

Apart from investigating students' perception towards their intercultural competence development, staff views are also valuable. The purpose of conducting interviews with staff is to explore academic staff perceptions towards the university's internationalisation strategy and to investigate how internationalisation has been incorporated with everyday teaching and learning.

### **Data Collection**

The process of data collection contains two parts: questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire and students interviews will be used to measure and monitor their intercultural competence, which will be conducted twice including the first week of the academic year (October/2016) and the last week of the taught element (June/2017). The staff interview will be carried out only once in February/2017.

### **Data Protection**

The interviews will be audio-recorded but all the information collected about the individual will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential.

**Contact Details**

I am conducting the research as a PhD student in the School of Education, Communication and Language Science (ECLS). The study has been approved by Newcastle University.

If you are interested in this study or need any further information please contact me by email ([y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk)).

**Thank you very much for your participation!**

08/03/2016



## **Information Sheet (student participants-questionnaire)**

You are invited to take part in a research study and your participation would be very valuable. Before you decide whether or not to take part, please take some time to read the following information. This PhD project aims to explore one-year postgraduate students' experiences in the Newcastle University under the context of internationalisation agenda. This is part of an investigation into Newcastle University's internationalisation strategy.

I am now recruiting participants to take part in a self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire will be carried out in October/2016 and June/2017 respectively (it would be preferable if you could take part at both times). Apart from the questionnaire participants, I am also looking for interview volunteers. The interview will be carried out in October/2016 (after the questionnaire) and June/2017 respectively (it would be preferable if you could commit to take part at both times). It will be a casual and relaxing 30 minutes for you to tell me your experiences about living and studying in Newcastle.

It is completely up to you whether or not to take part in the study. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you are willing to take part in this research, the result of the study will be sent to you at the end of your academic year.

If you are willing to take part in the self-report survey, please also sign the consent form on the next page before you start to fill in the questionnaire. And for those who are interested in participating in the interviews or need more information about it, please contact me by email ([y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk)).

**Thank you very much for your participation!**

08/03/2016

## **Information Sheet (student participants-interviews)**

*You are invited to take part in a research study and your participation would be very valuable. Before you decide whether or not to take part, please take some time to read the following information.*

This PhD project aims to explore one-year postgraduate students' experiences in the Newcastle University under the context of internationalisation agenda. This is part of an investigation into Newcastle University's internationalisation strategy.

I am now recruiting participants for face to face interviews. The interview will be carried out in October/2016 and June/2017 respectively (it would be preferable if you could commit to take part at both times). It will be a casual and relaxing 30 minutes for you to tell me your experiences about living and studying in Newcastle.

*It is completely up to you whether or not to take part in the study. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you are willing to take part in this research, the result of the study will be sent to you at the end of your academic year.*

If you are interested in this study or need any further information please contact me by email ([y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk)).

**Thank you very much for your participation!**

08/03/2016

## **Appendix B: The Survey**

### **Students' Intercultural Experiences**

First of all, thank you so much for taking part in the research study!

I am conducting the present research study as a PhD student in the School of Education, Communication and Language Science (ECLS). The study has been approved by Newcastle University.

The purpose of this study is to explore students' intercultural experiences and intercultural competence during their one-year Master studies.

In order to get more accurate and thorough information, the survey will be conducted twice including once at the beginning of your course and once at the end of your study. It takes about 8 minutes to complete each time.

#### **Contact Details**

If you are interested in finding out more about this study or need any further information, please contact the researcher Yuwei Liang ([y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:y.liang6@ncl.ac.uk)).

**Continue on next page...**

## **Research Project Information**

This survey is part of a study investigating the intercultural competence of students. There are 40 self-rate questions and some personal information. Before you start, please read and sign the following consent form.

### **Consent Form**

I confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

- I have been informed about the purpose of this study and I understand the information given to me.
- I agree to participate in this project and I understand that I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and any personal details which would reveal my identity will not be published.
- I understand that the results of this questionnaire will be used as part of a PhD thesis at Newcastle University as well as for subsequent publications in academic journals and presentation at academic conferences.
- I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the total confidentiality of the data.

**Participant:**

Signature or Student Number:

Date:

**Thank you very much for your time!**

**Continue on next page...**

## Section I: Multicultural Personality Questionnaire

To what extent do the following statements apply to you?

(Please circle the answer that is most applicable to you)

**I am the kind of person who...**

	totally not applicable	hardly applicable	moderately applicable	largely applicable	completely applicable
1 Sympathizes with others	1	2	3	4	5
2 Tries out various approaches	1	2	3	4	5
3 Finds it difficult to make contacts	1	2	3	4	5
4 Is reserved	1	2	3	4	5
5 Likes routine	1	2	3	4	5
6 Sets others at ease	1	2	3	4	5
7 Takes the lead	1	2	3	4	5
8 Is often the driving force behind things	1	2	3	4	5
9 Is looking for new ways to attain his/her goal	1	2	3	4	5
10 Makes contacts easily	1	2	3	4	5
11 Keeps calm when things don't go well	1	2	3	4	5
12 Has a feeling for what is appropriate in a specific culture	1	2	3	4	5
13 Seeks contact with people from a different background	1	2	3	4	5
14 Has fixed habits	1	2	3	4	5
15 Likes to imagine solutions for problems	1	2	3	4	5
16 Is insecure	1	2	3	4	5

**Continue on the next page...**

17	Wants to know exactly what will happen	1	2	3	4	5
18	Enjoys other people's stories	1	2	3	4	5
19	Starts a new life easily	1	2	3	4	5
20	Is under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
21	Gets upset easily	1	2	3	4	5
22	Leaves the initiative to others to make contacts	1	2	3	4	5
23	Pays attention to the emotions of others	1	2	3	4	5
24	Looks for regularity in life	1	2	3	4	5
25	Is nervous	1	2	3	4	5
26	Functions best in a familiar setting	1	2	3	4	5
27	Is a good listener	1	2	3	4	5
28	Works according to plan	1	2	3	4	5
29	Is inclined to speak out	1	2	3	4	5
30	Has a broad range of interests	1	2	3	4	5
31	Is apt to feel lonely	1	2	3	4	5
32	Enjoys getting to know others profoundly	1	2	3	4	5
33	Takes initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
34	Is not easily hurt	1	2	3	4	5
35	Works mostly according to a strict scheme	1	2	3	4	5
36	Notices when someone is in trouble	1	2	3	4	5
37	Senses when others get irritated	1	2	3	4	5
38	Worries	1	2	3	4	5
39	Works according to strict rules	1	2	3	4	5
40	Is a trendsetter in societal developments	1	2	3	4	5

**Continue on next page...**

**Section II: Personal details**

Student number<sup>53</sup>:  
 Programme of study:  
 Undergraduate degree subject:  
 Age:  
 Gender:  
 Country of origin:

1. Is English your first language?      Yes              No

-- If No, please go to answer question A, B, and C:

-- If Yes, please go to answer questions D, E, and F:

A. What is your overall IELTS<sup>54</sup> (or equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

B. Can you please rate below your satisfaction with your English language proficiency...

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5

C. How long have you been in the UK: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Can you communicate in languages other than English:      Yes              No

E. Have you lived in other countries except your home country:      Yes              No

F. If Yes, how long have you been in that place: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation!

**Interviewees are needed!! You will receive £10 for participation!! Are you curious about how you as a person will be developed through one year Master study not only academically but also psychological and personality aspects?**

**If so, why not take part in interviews (30 minutes each time, 3 times in total). It will be a casual chat with the researcher regarding your study in the UK. If you are interested, please write down your email address: \_\_\_\_\_**

**You will be contacted by the researcher with more details very soon!**

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>53</sup> Student number is required for statistical purposes. You will not be identified by this throughout the study.

<sup>54</sup> IELTS stands for International English Language Test System exam.

## Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

### Interview Consent Form

I confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms that are specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Participant:**

Name of Participant:

Date:

**Researcher:**

Name of Researcher:

Date:

## **Appendix D: Student Interview Guide**

### **Interview guide for students (OCT/2016)**

#### **Section I: Personal details**

- Name/ Student number:
- E-mail address:
- Programme of study:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Country of origin:
- Months/years in the UK:

#### **Section II**

- Why do you choose to study abroad?
  - Have you been abroad before?
  - What do you expect to gain from studying here?
  - What do you see as the most important part of the one year experience?
  - What do you want to do when you are here?
  - What do you think about your first week? Anything you want to talk about?
  - What challenges have you encountered so far?
  - How do you feel about the challenges? Positive or negative?
- 
- Do you think the university is internationalised?
  - How do you define if a university is internationalised or not?
  - Have you heard of the term 'intercultural competence'/ 'cross-cultural communication'? What does the term mean to you?
  - Do you expect to enhance intercultural competence?
  - Do you have any plan after graduate? Where to go?

## Interview guide for students (June/2017)

### Section I: Personal details

- Name/ Student number:
- E-mail address:
- Programme of study:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Country of origin:
- Months/years in the UK:

### Section II

- Can you tell me what do you remember most about your studying abroad experience?
- What have you gained during your year of study abroad?
- What did you expect to learn/experience but you haven't?
- What sort of impact do you think the experience has had on you?
- How do you feel in general about studying here?
- Now what do you see as the most important part of studying here?
- Do you think the university is an internationalised university? If so, in what ways?
- What is your understanding of the term 'intercultural competence'? What do these terms mean to you?
  
- How have your IC been developed during the year?
  - Do you think your English hampers or facilitates you to develop IC?
  - Do you think you can better develop IC if you are able to speak a language other than mother tongue?
- How intercultural competence has been delivered in class?
  - Any international or intercultural elements in your curriculum content?

- Any intercultural communication when you do assessment or group work?
  - How do academic staff deliver lesson in class? Do they value IC?
  - To what extent do you think that the content of your course meets the needs of all the student in your program?
- 
- What activities do you do during weekends that you think have developed your IC?
  - How activities you take part in in your spare time has developed your IC or your understanding of IC?
  - What do you think is the most efficient way to develop your IC, though faculty, curriculum or co-curriculum?
  - Do you think it is important for you to develop intercultural competence in your field of study? Why or why not?
  - Do you have the intention to work somewhere else after you graduate?
  - How do you think IC can help your performance in your career?
  - What makes a person to be successful in your field?

## **Appendix E: Staff Interview Guide**

### **Interview guide for staff (Feb/2017)**

#### **Section I: Preliminary details (filled by researcher)**

- Name of the program you teach:
- Your role in your department:
- E-mail address (I can send you the result of my study if you are interested)

#### **Section II**

##### **Meaning**

- Have you heard about the university's internationalisation strategy?/ What do you understand about the university's internationalisation agenda?
- To what extent does the internationalisation agenda reflect the importance of developing intercultural competence in students and staff?

##### **Application**

- How much does the internationalisation (strategy) affect your discipline?
  - What is the ratio of home and international students in your field?
  - Any activities that have been developed to develop students' IC?
- What impacts that working with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have brought to your approach of teaching?
  - How about when you've come to design the content?
  - What about assessment, how do international students cope with your assessment methods?
- How has working with students from a range of cultural backgrounds added value to your discipline?
- What have you learnt as a teacher to challenge your beliefs as a result of being in a culturally diverse environment?

##### **Challenges**

- Can you give some examples of the challenges that you've faced as a teacher teaching in a multicultural environment?
- Have you noticed any challenges that your students have faced?
- Do you have any ideas how the university could further support the development of international and intercultural dimensions in your discipline?

## Appendix F: The Summary of Key Authors' Studies in IoHE, IoC and Student Experiences

Year	Author(s)	Title	Variables/Key words	Methods
2017	Lantz-Deaton, C.	Internationalisation and the development of students' IC	Friendship, Learning motives, stress, contact hypothesis	Mixed-method: two-wave IDI
2017	Clifford, V. & Montgomery, C.	Designing an internationalised curriculum for HE	IoC, academic staff.	Online discussions
2017	Bedenlier, S., Kondakci, Y., & Zawachi-Richter	Literature review on IoHE	IoHE	A review from 1997-2016
2016	Castro et al.	Student mobility and IoHE	How internationalisation is understood.	Two sets of questionnaire
2016	Yemini, M. & Sagie, N.	Literature review	IoHE	A review from 1980-2014
2013	Jae-Eun Jon	IaH in Korean HE	Interaction and IC (contact hypothesis)	Mixed-method (IDI and interviews)
2015	Harrison, N.	IaH review	International experience: intercultural friendships, and curriculum. Group work.	Literature review on IAHE from 2000 to 2015

2015	Mantzourani et al.	Perceptions on teaching ISs	Internationalisation strategy, staff preparedness	survey
2014	Lillyman, S. & Bennett, C.	Providing a positive learning experience for international students studying at UK universities: A literature review.	Student experiences	A review between 2000 and 2012.
2014	Clifford, V. & Montgomery, C.	Transformative learning through IoC in HE	IoC, policy, academic staff, global citizenship	Longitudinal: online discussion forum
2013	Glass, C., & Wesmont, C.	Academic success and cross-cultural interactions of domestic and international students	Friendship, social ties, curricula, co-curriculum activity	Global Perspective Inventory (N=18628).
2013	Sawir, E.	IoC: contribution of ISs	Curriculum, contact	interviews
2013	Dune, C	Motivations for intercultural contact among host country university students	Intercultural contact, social exchange theory, motivations	Interviews (N=24)
2012	Volet & Ang	Culturally mixed group: intercultural learning	Group work: language, stereotype	Interviews
2011	Neil Harrison	Personality and early life	Language ability and confidence. Prior	Survey

		experience on intercultural interaction	overseas (contact hypothesis).	
2011	Sheila Trahar & Fiona Hyland	Experiences and perceptions of IoHE in the UK	IoH, student interaction, group work	Focus group: staff, international, and home students
2011	Leask & Carroll	Internationalisation, student experiences of inclusion and engagement	IoC, integration, CCC	SEQ survey
2011	Sawir, E	Academic staff response to ISs and IoC: impact of disciplinary differences	Challenges, group work.	Interviews with staff
2010	Hendrickson, B., Rosen, D., & Aune, R.	Friendship networks, social connectedness, homesickness, and satisfaction levels of ISs.	Friendship, homesickness.	Survey (N=84)
2010	Gu, Q., Schweisfurth, M., & Day, C.	Learning and growing in a 'foreign' context: Intercultural experiences of international students.	Cultural shock; students develop English language, cultural knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes; challenges;	Longitudinal: two-round survey and four-wave interviews.



2010	Svensson, L. & Wihlborg, M.	Internationalising the content of HE: curriculum	Understanding of IoHE, curriculum.	Study review
2009	Schweisfurth, M. & Gu, Q.	International students experiences in the UK HE	Interculturality, contact theory	Survey
2009	Montgomery, C.	A decade of internationalisation: students' views on cross cultural group work	Mixed culture group work, student experiences.	Interviews in 3 different disciplines.
2009	Leask, B	Using Formal and informal curriculum to improve interactions between home and ISs	IC, IoC, interactions.	SEQ survey
2009	Turner, Y	Pedagogic challenges in using group work to create an intercultural learning space.	Group work, IC	Student's commentaries.
2009	Parsons, R.	The effects of an internationalised university experience on domestic students	Language, knowledge about the host country, attitudes, skills.	Survey (N=1302) students
2009	Soosay, C.	International and domestic students' perspectives on	Group discussion, language, and adjustment.	Interviews with home and ISs.

		teaching and learning		
2009	Dunne, C.	Host students' perspectives of intercultural contact in an Irish university.	Mature and young local students; social life, motivations, pressure.	Longitudinal study. Two-round interviews.
2009	Harrison & Peacock	Cultural distance, mindfulness and passive xenophobia	Contact theory, IaH, intergroup interactions	Focus groups (60) and interviews (40)
2008	Summers & Volet	Students' attitudes towards culturally mixed groups in international campus.	Group work, social contact	Survey (N=233)
2007	Robson & Turner	Academics reflecting on learning and teaching in an 'internationalised' faculty	Understanding of internationalisation, learning and teaching.	Discussions (N=35)
2007	Kehm, B. M., & Teichler, U.	Research on internationalisation in HE	IoHE	A review between 1997 and 2006.
2007	K. Ippolito	Promoting intercultural learning	Language, pressure, indifference as challenges of intercultural learning	Mixed method: students and staff at different stage.

2006	Deardorff	Identification and assessment of IC as a student outcome of internationalisation	Definition of IC	Questionnaire and a Delphi technique
2003	Wachter, B.	An introduction: IaH in context	IaH	review

## Appendix G: The Summary of Key Authors' Studies in IC and Student Experiences

Year	Author	Sample	Variables/ Key words	Research design
2016	Schartner & Young	Towards an integrated conceptual model of IS adjustment and adaptation	In-sojourn and pre-sojourn factors	Pre- and post- MPQ and interview
2016	Basow & Gaugler	Predicting adjustment of US college students studying abroad	Language proficiency, social interactions with locals	MPQ
2015	Schartner	MA CCC and ALT (N=239)	CE, SI, ES, OM, and FL.	Pre- and post- MPQ and interviews
2014	Van Bakel, et al.	Western expatriates in Netherlands (N=65)	Social interactions with locals  IC	MPQ- Longitudinal
2013	Young et al.	International students in taught MA programmes in the UK (N=102)	Academic achievement, psychological wellbeing, satisfaction with life.	MPQ-cross-sectional
2013	Woods et al.	Pre-university college international students in an Australian university (N=163)	IC	MPQ- Longitudinal

2011	Peltokorpi & Froese	International expatriates in Japan (N=181)	OM and interaction adjustment; ES, CE and general adjustment; SI and work adjustment.	MPQ-Cross-sectional
2011	Yakunina, et al.	International students in the US (N=336)	Openness to diversity' psychological adjustment.	MPQ-cross-sectional
2011	Behrnd & Porzelt	IC and study abroad duration	study abroad duration	Pre- and post-CIQ
2011	Harrison, N	Second year UK graduates (N=755) in three universities.	Intercultural interaction, open-mindedness.	Big five inventory
2010	Williams & Johnson	Multicultural attitudes and friendships with ISs. US students (N=80)	International friendships, CE, SI, ES, OM, and FL.	MPQ Survey
2007	Gill, S	Overseas students' intercultural adaptation as intercultural learning	IC, transformative learning	Interviews
2007	Leong	MPQ: socio-psychological adaptation of Asian undergraduates	FL, SI	MPQ
2003	Van Oudenhoven,	Expatriates in Taiwan (N=102)	IC	MPQ-Cross-sectional

	Mol & Van der Zee			
2003	Ali, Van der Zee & Sanders	Expatriate spouses in 29 countries (N=247)	IC	MPQ-Cross-sectional
2002	Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee	International Business native and foreign students in the Netherlands (N=171)	Academic achievement	MPQ-Longitudinal
2001	Mol, Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee	International high school students in Taiwan (N=205)	Extra-curricular activities	MPQ-Longitudinal

## Appendix H: Interview Transcriptions (Staff example)

**Name: S2    School: Business**

L: Can I ask you the first question, are you familiar with the university international strategy plan?

S1: Vaguely yes.

L: Can you say a little bit from your understanding?

S: My focus is more school's internationalisation and you may know that business school we have international partnerships with universities across globe and obviously we keen to develop more international links with the universities mainly from research but also for exchange more students at your level rather than undergraduate and postgraduate ones. I am also aware of the university wide initiatives such as the global experience, opportunity and gain global advantage initiative, which is actually I think happening tomorrow. In terms of recruitment, I am aware that university works a lot with agents in different countries but I couldn't tell you the ins and outs of all of these.

L: What components do you think should be in the international strategy?

S: I think for the university, it needs to be different components and I know in the business school, we have a large large number of international students to the extent that on some programs over the last few years, we've had more than half cohort of students from the same country. So most of our postgraduate programs now have probably about 60 to 70% international students so we work a lot with international students. So I think the teaching element obvious should clearly be in there. But I think ideally it needs to go beyond that and really taking into account more the workplace side and give students a better first understanding how things work in different context because I think there is only so much we can do in the classroom and while we are trying on all of our programs I think to give students a better understanding of their peers and in my modules, I give them tools trying to explore how different cultures different people differ from a cultural aspect in addition to their personality. I still think there is sometimes a bit of resistance also a bit of lack of understanding of what this actually means in practice because I am never quite sure how much would we do in the classroom really makes any sense to students are in

the workplace and experience these things first hand. I might do our students wrong by saying that but my impression is you know that's classroom, that's theory, and they will deal with the real world but I don't think that majority actually make that connection well while they are here with us. But then I suppose also in terms of internationalisation this exchange and I know that the GEO office really good chance to work with students from other countries with other ideas on projects in developing markets. I think this is an excellent thing that should be increased. But I also think research should be part of this because this is what Newcastle University is about, we are research in terms of university but at least in my department, we always feel that the international links we have are built by personal connections that colleagues have with colleagues in another country and then that over time becomes a bit formalised.

L: Do you actually think students' international experience can benefit their future work career in business world?

S: Well, I think depends on their own I think. We hear a lot about globalisation and you know people working with others. I am not sure this is the reality for the majority of them because for my understanding a lot of our graduates I couldn't tell you how many percent; I think a lot of our graduates work in largely mono-cultural environment so they may be working in their home country, the majority of their colleagues are from the same country and depending on obviously what that country is that and how culture diverse that is. I think it's probably a fairly small group of students who really work internationally and who need the international and cultural skills in a daily basis. I think those students are probably well prepared as much as we can prepare them in the classroom but I am not sure it's really relevant for the majority of them. And what I find very sad I was in charge of one of the dual programmes we have with Dutch university, particularly on this program that involves study at two different universities in two different countries, students were very resistant to the idea that they would be studying with people from different country and it's a degree in international business management as well, but that particular cohort I could very imagine that I am going to do my degree and I am working in my own country so even though they were studying in international business management of some description, I don't think there was openness to new experiences and the fact that they actually will be working with people from different backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds, different personalities



and there is always this assumption that we are best, why can't the others be like us, which in my view totally defeats the object and I find it always very sad to reflect on this and think well actually you miss a really really valuable opportunity there. You may not agree with those people, but it helps you understand where you come from in a different way by interacting with others and that's something that our experience personally but that's probably outside of your project.

L: Can you tell me specifically how much does the internationalisation actually affect your teaching?

S: I think internationalisation is a very abstract...

L: In terms of students' diversity.

S: A very abstract term, I think what we were saying particular in the business school is and that already highlighted that particular postgraduate program that somewhere between 60, 80% are international students and in our undergraduate programs are probably 30, 40%. I am reluctant to say what I am going to say because it may come across as stereotypical and prejudice and bias which I don't wanted to be because this is not the way I think but we are dealing with students with very different educational backgrounds with very different expectations in their cultures to think independently so I think a lot of these students are ill prepared for the education system they've coming to. I know there obviously a lot talked about English language and I am sure this is part of the equation. And also the type of program we are having at maters level particular are conversion programs so the majority students particular international students don't have relevant subject expertise while as some of, the majority of our home students have some subject expertise in their backgrounds so a lot of the teaching to me feel like having two different cohorts in one room and struggled to please both of them and I am painting a very stereotypical picture here and it's not as clear cut as that. One cohort feels like struggling, struggling to understand what's been said in terms of the subject language, language more generally, maybe been used to different accents and dialects, to the speed of speech, but also to the expectations that we are having and what is the thing about critical thinking and 'do you really want me to think but it's just me as a student, I am not supposed to have an opinion because you are the teacher you know best', so you know with this kind of assumption they really struggle when I don't give them the answer because the reason because there is no answer in my view so I think

probably causes quite a lot of unhappiness in a sense as a teacher, I feel my duty is support these students as much as I can now if you get 50 of them in the classroom, this is very very difficult to do and then you've got another group of students who are very attuned to the Anglo-Saxon education system. They are very independent. Their language skills tend to be better, they may have some real work experience or a lot of we covered in the classroom, they can immediately connect all sorts of things, experiences they've had. Their English is much better in many cases their native language so they can easily engaging discussion and it almost feels as a teacher I am letting these students down because I am not stretching them enough and it's part of our logo is we want to be challenging but I can't challenge them because they are minority of the group while as this is a big group over there who is very struggling and who I need to help alone so it's really are, and I know it sounds strange makes students happy I am not here to make master students happy but I want to do a good job for them and I want to meet their needs as much as I can but I don't feel I can do that, now in reality we have a lot of international students who get it who have studied in the UK or in the US or elsewhere and they get it immediately and they do well but particularly my module is in the first semester and I think it's probably most pronounced then students are coming and they are struggling to settle to fit and I am sure you have similar experiences 'Oh, Gosh, Newcastle is so tiny comparison to my hometown and it's so chilly and you know it's all sort of everyday settling in in addition to all the settling into the university, into new education system and new language and new life almost together with potential issues like I've got to look after myself, I've got to shop coz if I don't go shopping I don't have any food so there is a lot going on and maybe more pronounced then. I think the undergraduate level is probably less pronounced but it really takes four three years for the majority international students to really settle in I think. Obviously you do see some change more quickly but I've got a second year undergraduate module and you can clearly see still that 'but I am a student, you are the teacher you tell me what is right.' I found students said that to me before Christmas, 'I couldn't find the answer on the internet' I said well that possible for the assignment but you need to think this through and tell me what the outcome of your thought process it, you need to make influences, make conclusions from the information that you have and looked me with very wide eyes if this was something completely new. I think since they are moving into third year, this is becoming less pronounced but I think postgraduate level is very challenging and I

am aware that we are letting a number of our students down. That's not very satisfactory.

L: How do you see because we were talking about some of the challenges of being international, can you let me know some of the opportunities or the things you feel like the benefit part of it?

S: I know it's very easy to get them the impression that international students are the pain in the neck when you hear academics talk about them. You are absolutely right, I think there are a lot of opportunities. I just finished marking, a reflective piece of my postgraduate first semester module and I think what students have realised is the challenges they are facing personally won't working with others realising that maybe their communication style wasn't appropriate, that their way of interacting is very different to someone else is, that they might have inadvertently offended someone because they are just used to very direct way of communicating so I do think that it offers enormous learning opportunities if we get students to engage in group work deliberately with people from other cultures and backgrounds but also let them reflect on this and really see how that affects them and what they can learn by almost forgetting the mirror held up by someone who is very different and unfortunately not a lot of student have reached that level this year. But in the past I think, it's been very very valuable and thinking back when I was an international student, little things in the hall of residence, like how many different correct ways of washing the dishes there are is absolutely fascinating because you always assume the way you do is right but then someone else assumes is right. It's exactly the same with interpersonal issues and the assumptions with which we approach quite naturally certain situations and these assumptions are to a large extent informed by our culture so I think it presents enormous opportunities to learn very directly about other people how the life works in a different country but also this opportunity to learn about oneself and to question oneself and I suppose what is meant by cultural competence having that understanding having that analytical and reflective ability to work with others and work on oneself to assess situations, reflect on them and then do things differently if they haven't worked very well, well do them the same if they have. I think the challenge within that is unfortunately a lot of our students are under pressure to perform and working with other students in groups with group work has been assessed as well as extra pressure and extra stress. I don't think the majority of them are opening enough to the opportunities and take the risk that to put themselves into

that engagement with others, realising actually not get as good mark as you might got working on your own because there's so much this focus on I need to pass my assessment semester one, I need to pass my assessment semester two, I need to pass my dissertation, I need to get the certificate at the end because I am belittling the situation here. I know that a lot of students have gone into debt their family have gone into debt, this is a really big financial struggle so I fully understand where that coming from to get with notions of I can't fail, it's a notion of losing face which is probably much more familiar to you than to me so I understand that but I think it is this opportunity to interact with people who are different. This can be uncomfortable.

L: It can be to some extent. And also can I ask you, you mentioned about group work and you also mentioned about the home students, the two cohorts, home and international students, can I ask you how have you changed your teaching strategies in the classroom to accommodate those two completely different groups of students.

S: I personally found it is very very hard, I know don't feel I've got an answer and I don't feel like I would do justice to different students' needs and I've talking to the colleagues, I don't think it's very satisfactory for them as well. My main module, it's a skill module and the program is human resource management program which is credited by professional association so the module needs to do certain things. So the way of try to link the two is to say in the class, look for some of you, this might be brand new and really scary and these are some steps I'd like you to take, so for example, they've got to do three assessments, to cover all the learning outcomes of the module, the first one is critical evaluation of a journal article so what I was saying in class for example is I understand for some of you, this is brand new, you've never done this before, it's really scary, here are some guiding questions, here are the things I'd like you to do, we've got seminar to prepare for it, and for those students who've done it before, I say look, you are postgraduate students for the first time, you may have done that in an undergraduate level but you may did a different level so I still want you to take this seriously because it gives you a feel for how well you are doing a postgraduate level, you might have really good and you are finally you're graduate but we have higher expectations now. And similarly with the last piece as I've just said a reflective piece so I said look some of you, you may have done that before, I want you to keep blog every week, to note down some thoughts and what you have learned. I gave them an example of reflective learning, this is what it looks like, we've got seminar tying directly without assignments and again give them a bit

of support. To those students who but actually I think reflection is an aspect that a lot of them struggle with so I don't think we've seen many whom are purposefully reflected, you know keep diaries and blogs and so on, so I think that's probably new to a lot of them but for them I think the emphasis is a bit more on it's really a good tool to enhance your professional career because the majority of the students will work in human resource profession and the professional bodies there are probably not surprisingly quite keen on continuous professional development so I think the emphasis there is much more on 'we do that in class' but actually you need that for your career as well and this is how you may use it for your continue professional development. So it's more trying to tailor that and making clear in class, 'look, for some, you're starting at a very very basic level, the real beginners for other students who start somewhere higher up but still it helps you to give you a new idea about how you can go about these things but also you just develop at a higher level. And I don't think there is much else I can do in this course. Now for the group work in particular, I think again that something that the minority of students would've experienced in their undergraduate so I make available in an abbreviated version of cultural orientation's framework that's an explore session around time around communication and probably something else. So that's students have a better understanding why other people might differ and when cultural dimension might come in. On my module and another module have a bit personality testing as well so they do Bilban questionnaire, I don't know if you are familiar with Bilben?

L: Not really.

S: Most of works were down 1970 and 80s. He was looking at the role of people in teamwork mono-cultural and found that actually there are different roles that individual's have, I am sure you experienced that, there will be some individuals bounce off great ideas all the time, they are very creative, very innovative but once the ideas out, they are interested in something else. And then there are people very good, pulling things together at the end, right ok, you've got this this this, he is the final report, there will be others somewhere along the way, yea I don't know someone, so they are very good at creating this connection to other people, drawing in the expertise and support they need so he found specific so students get better understanding there is worldwide not everyone is exactly like them and how they might use the natural preferences with some of their peers work in a group work. So it's really educating them a bit and giving them some tools to think differently about

their experiences rather than dismissing group work as hard difficult and nobody wants to do it and it just distracts from my mark and one thing I keep telling them from my own experience group work is really hard regardless the way you are because that seems to be in an assumption there that we just doing that to make life hard to students but that's not the case it is hard. And I am working in an international environment; we've got colleagues from many nationalities so you know culture comes in there so we have to work together, we all very different, we all have our ideas, we all want to get things down, so it is very very very hard. I think that is something I am trying to get across to people, it is hard but in a sense it's almost safe environment to do that as part of the module when for example on mine, it counts for third of your mark and you actually each of you has control over two thirds of your mark individually. Then doing the workplace of failing and getting the sack so I am not sure it's always right, it's received in that way because students think it's different work but it isn't, it's still very very hard so it's trying to make that clear but as I said I don't think I feel I've got the answer, I don't think I am doing a good job, maybe that just perceptionism.

L: How do you think the students respond to those kinds of activities?

S: I think group work generally the majority of students don't like and complain, now I think there is an educator, sometimes to have to make other people do things because it's good for them. And I believe very strongly that particular in business we need to give our students' skills that they will need in work whatever they are doing, very very few positions where someone works on their own. I think working with others is an important part of that and I think working with people from other culture is also important if it's just on the negotiation side, organisation has a supplier somewhere I need to be able to negotiate, to deal with them. So from that point of view, students will need understanding so I don't think they like what we were doing, I think it's still very very important. We have to stand up for saying you may not like it but it's good for you, you will realise at some point. That's said, I am getting incredible student work in group work so some students really make it work, they enjoy it, they produce excellent work and last year for one of the group presentations, I actually gave them 80, I don't think I am giving a 80 once a year on average. So it was absolutely brilliant and you could clearly see it was highly professional. I would've been very happy for these students to go out to any organisation here deliver that presentation, it was great. So but then I don't know if it helps them what I doing in

class or if it's just a natural luck that we're getting the right mixture of people together who make it work. If it's the skill of individual so just makes it happen so I don't know how much of that is actually done to the tools that I am giving them and also my other colleagues are doing.

L: Can I ask you one more question?

S: Of course.

L: Do you think, from your personal view, your students cross cultural communication has been developed over the year?

S: Probably, it's very hard for me to see what's going on outside of the classroom. One thing you do see and I no longer teach them in semester two but I think one thing you see our students' settling and to move with the program of study, they are gaining more competence generally better understanding of the language what's expected also their knowledge develop so they feel more confident contributing so I can see this. I'd like to think and I have no way of providing you with any clear evidence here. I'd like to think that they are gaining a better understanding of other people and I'd also like to think that they form friendships with some people from other countries and I know our past students some become couples and have relationships and visited each other in a romantic fashion and just friendship fashion so I know it is happening but then it might just be exactly the same as might happen with students from the same culture. I do think that some students particular more reflective ones have worked on the way which they approach tasks, they interact, they communicate with students from other background and cultures but I couldn't tell you how many, my guess is it's probably a fairly small number of students, a small group. And chances are they probably would've got without me as well.

L: I am actually curious because I've never been to the business class here, so when you teach can you really see the gap between home students or international students? or students just form their own cohorts, their own group?

S: You can see it, I mean it's interesting when I teach in a big theatre, actually what I found that there is always a group fairly at the back, we've got German cohort, so the German European students sort of clustering here together with some international students who is the only one from their country and then sort of the rest is, majority of our students are Chinese, so the rest is sort of Chinese, Although sometimes we

have a group of students formed friendships I think most of them are some German, some Indian students sitting in between but yes you can very clearly see that and you will see the majority of Chinese students coming into together and will be talking to each other also in their own language which actually is something that came up from group work students say that I was really upset because I was the only non-Chinese in a group of six and they will be talking in their own language and I feel very excluded so I think there is an issue there but you can clearly see that because all student groups this year bar one mixed in one of the lectures, I want them together, it's really a lot of shuffling going about, and you realise actually how much they are sticking to their own groups and also that those students they only ones from their country so sort of stick themselves to some of minority groups so I am not quite sure that tells about their intercultural competence. I know from students and staff committee meeting that a lot of Chinese students are actually quite unhappy about this, because I didn't come to the UK to be there with 60% of Chinese students, they say I would rather work with students from other nationalities so I don't think it's very satisfactory solution for anyone, but yes you can clearly see that you have to force them to work in multinational groups because otherwise if you let students choose, it's a bit same like school if you let people choose, they have a strong team and weak team because nobody wants weak player in their sports team, it's a bit like that, there is a perception that one group is very good and realistically, all things been equal, they look better but they are starting off at a higher level of competence in terms of English, in terms of education, in terms of subject knowledge as I said earlier so of course they are better but over the course of the year actually you see that it's not clear cut that you can see, oh those are all our distinction students and that's are all our pass students or fail students. It evens itself much more out.

L: Can I ask if you will take the international students, those kind of fact into the consideration of assessment, like evaluate or assess their work?

S: We can't because we need to ensure that every student is treated the same and obviously that is very unfair given that some students have a child starting point than others, I don't think we can take that into consideration the assessment, so students have to achieve a certain level because this is what the quality insurance agency for our education requires and that is what the examiners require so our students need to meet a certain threshold. I think what happens in practice is that we probably ignore more of the typos and sort of grammatical errors, I probably read something



twice or three times trying to understand what the student means because it is very hard for those students and there is always some that make you wonder why they are here because clearly they are struggling and struggling all the way through and it's only one or two a year but you come to the exam board in June and basically the exam board says look, we've got to let these students go with an exit award because they are not making through the dissertation and it's really that's small number of students we are just think why have they been admitted in the first place. But in a sense we can't distinguish between the students who are good, maybe for a competent English speaker or a native speaker, look you really need to work on your proofreading and your editing, whereas we probably wouldn't necessary do that with non-native speakers, I will probably be harsh with them because I recognise they are a higher level, they can do better so no, it's really a hard one, how are you taking into account and I think one aspect that helps become that is if you have different modules assessments, we've got different tasks that students are more or less comfortable with and that together form the bigger assessment so for example, the last reflective piece I had 15% failure rate on this but overall it's only 3 of 67 students that I have failed so it evens itself out because some students find something naturally easier than the others so it does even itself out but yes it's hard and I feel bad because I've got some student contact me after usually the first assessment before Christmas and they are really upset, they said I've never failed in my life, yes but don't panic now, you focus on the rest and you will be fine and chances are they are fine but you know it is very upsetting. I do think that particular those who struggle are require a number of position.

L: Ok, thank you so much for all your answers.

## Appendix I: Interview Transcriptions (Students example)

Name: A      Gender: M      Age: 23      Nationality: India      Programme:  
Business

With working experience      IELTS: 8.0

L: Why did you choose to study abroad?

A: I've done a lot of research after I finished my graduate degree and my bachelor was in Business and Administration in my country, so looking to get some international exposure and experiences. So after doing a lot of research, I found UK has a lot of good universities. The language wouldn't be a problem since I already know English. And they didn't ask for that many exams and tests comparing to other countries. So they only ask for IELTS test so there wasn't a gmat. And also it is a one-year course so I could finish earlier to get a job.

L: Have you been abroad before?

A: Yea, many times. I've been to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. I have visited UK maybe 4 years ago just for 2 weeks because I have some relatives near London, my aunt, yea.

L: All the countries are for travelling purpose?

A: Just for travelling.

L: You did your undergraduate in India. Do you have any working experience?

A: With the family business. My father he is in a business of playground equipment so basically the swings, or sort of equipment to the hotels, to the schools and also for the public parks. So I accompany him to visit clients and discuss and explain to them the products.

L: Within India?

A: Yea, all in India.

L: Is that the reason why you choose to study in Business School?

A: Yes. My family is in business and I obvious have an interest for having my own business, not one specific thing but many things, maybe a restaurant, a shop, an electronic store. So many things with the food or travelling.

L: So what do you expect to learn from this one year experience?

A: It is a deeper question. Basically to get use to different cultures, to meet a lot of people, a lot of international exposure. Since many modules I am interested in, my course offers these modules, marketing, HRM and managing cross-culture. So I found it is a good opportunity to learn more about these subjects.

L: You just mentioned about international exposure, so what do you think this can help you with your future career?

A: Since I have some experiences in India, if I gain some experiences in work or volunteering experience in the UK. I feel it can help me to work in Europe or Asia since I will have an idea of the working environment and culture. So.. It's always good to learn more about different cultures and different people. Especially in the place like UK and Newcastle, there are a lot of international students so you get to learn about everyone's culture.

L: So do you think it can benefit your career?

A: Yea.

L: What do you see as the most important part of this one year experience, which is the most valuable to you?

A: I am still finding out things little by little but of course, we are going to have a lot of individual as well as group assignments. And also during my undergraduate study, so basically this can develop my communication skills, maybe leadership skills and group working skills. These are important criteria to get into a good job, into a good company or even start own business, it always good to have these skills.

L: What do you want to do while you are here?

A: I want to do as much as I can.

L: For example?

A: Of course, the study is the first thing. I would like to travel to explore more about UK and Newcastle during my free time. I am also interested in taking some

volunteering work, especially with the animals, to visit the animal shelters because this area will be something I feel like I can bring back to my country, especially my state there are not many these animal shelters. So this is one of my interests, if I could alongside with my business in the future to open an animal shelter, especially for the cats because..

L: You love cats?

A: Yes, we've rescued a few cats in my country and there wasn't many place to give them if you rescued them, nobody wants to take them so they are in our flat, we have kept them with us. So there must many people who are in the similar situation to help for these animals. Even they have the right to live decently.

L: How do you feel about the culture here so far?

A: Now I came to Newcastle, everyone has been super friendly. Many people have gone out of their way to help me. For example, when I first arrive, I have booked the university accommodation but I have found the room was a bit small since I would like to keep some of my food in my own fridge and cooking separately. So I found there was s studio flat available next to the business school and the prices are almost the same. So I explained to the accommodation office that I would like to change and they said I need to find someone to take my contract. Next day, thank God, I found someone and he wanted, likes my accommodation so in the end, they managed to transfer the funds to another accommodation so even there is any problem in the flat, the pipe, the light anything. If I just tell them immediately they will send someone to take care of anything.

L: What challenges have you encountered so far?

A: Challenges, ok. First, during the first week, my father was with me so I was happy. Now he is gone so I miss my family. I think the biggest challenge is you miss your home, your family, the food definitely and the weather so these are the biggest challenge. Because the food you can eat for a few days but after sometime you miss the food from your own country.

L: Apart from missing your home town, family, food and weather, do you have any difficulties you have encountered so far?

A: So far.. Thanks to God, things have been going smoothly. Now I am on the fourth week get to the project so I guess there will be a lot of deadlines coming soon so there will be some pressure for this project.

L: How do you feel about the challenges? Positive or negative?

A: It's definitely positive because without some pressure, you cannot improve or develop. So some amount of pressure is required for us to learn, to mix with different people to learn about their cultures, their habits and everything. And also prepare us for working environment where there will be a lot of deadlines, submissions and everything. So it's positive.

L: To what extent do you think the university is internationalised?

A: I have done a lot of research. I was checking so of course Newcastle, it comes at top 300 universities majority of the website. It has triple-accredited for that in Business School so that's another criterion why I chose it because in the entire world, there are less than 100 business schools which have the triple-accredited lesson so that comes another top 1% of business schools. Secondly, I have narrowed my research to UK so there are fewer this triple-accredited business schools and also it parts of Russell Group. So after I did a lot of research and also the scholarship so I made my choice for Newcastle.

L: How do you think it is an internationalised university?

A: Because there are large proportion of students from other countries as well as the teachers are from many countries, so we have them from Canada, Germany, from all over. So like in my class, I am studying in postgraduate course so there are approximately I think 70%, 80% are international students in my class. So it feels nicer to study with a lot of international students and we all come from different countries to learn. So together, we all have the same challenges.

L: How do you think the multicultural and multi-nationality can help you during the time?

A: Ok. So when we mix the people, we learn more about the other cultures, the other habits, so even about eating habits, about study habits, about many things. How to communicate with them. What is polite and what in impolite in different cultures. So for example, in some cultures, you know, may use a little bit bad words but in a friendly way to call each other but using that to another, someone from another

culture, they will find very offensive so many things like this could learn. I haven't used any bad words.

L: When you talk to your classmates who from different cultural backgrounds, do you feel any difficulties or not any?

A: Now most of my classmates who have come basically to come to UK, we have already known a certain level of English so most of them are good with their English to talk to, to explain. I made many friends from China, Thailand and all over the places so I found them very friendly and open, maybe a little more than the people from Europe. Of course it will still take time because still in the first month, still everybody doesn't know each other that close.

L: So have you made any friends yet?

A: Yea, a few.

L: Where are they come from?

A: So there are a few from China and there are a few from Thailand. There are another four boys with me are from India who have come from different parts. Although I haven't seen much of them in lectures, they haven't been there, but there are many people because now I go to the class, I don't have specifically where to sit. I sit wherever I get to sit so everywhere I meet someone new.

L: Do you enjoy it?

A: Yea, definitely.

L: Have you heard of the term 'intercultural competence'?

A: No. Sorry, what is it (again)?

L: Intercultural competence.

A: I am sorry I don't think I have.

L: That's ok, no problem. To what extent...so it's like, when you talk to your classmates from different cultures, you just mentioned about the required level of English proficiency, which means you can communicate very easily.

A: Yea.

L: But apart from that, what do you think is very important in communicating with people with differences?

A: Humm, basically we discussed about the course, then we discussed about places we have visited since we came here. So we give each other ideas about this restaurant is a good place to try, or you know, you get good sandwiches from that place, then we discuss about part-time work, where we would like to work after we finish studies. So yea we discussed about these sorts of things. So I guess that opens the barriers, you know since we all have these common questions, can we get a job after one year we finish our studies, what are the visa requirements, do you want to travel home during the holidays because you miss your country, you miss your family, so yea these sorts of things.

L: Do you feel difficulties to make friends with local people?

A: Not difficult, it's not impossible. But in my class, there are very few British actually but once you start talking to them, they are friendly and approachable. I found it much easier to make friends with people from Asian countries maybe because we all have similar sort of traditions and cultures.

L: Fair enough, so what are your plans after graduate, you mentioned about going back for family business, can you develop on that a little bit?

A: Actually I have many ideas. I am still trying to discover what I would like to do. Definitely I have some plans to do back in my country but I would like to work, to get a job either in UK, Europe or anywhere so I could learn more about the business, more about cultures and more about everything. And at the same time, I could improve something in my country, like animal shelter and facility like that. So I have a lot of ideas now, but I am still trying to how I can go about everything.

L: Are you going to use the one year to think what you want to do really?

A: Yea, and basically I would like to get a job because the salary in my country is a bit low comparing to Europe. Now UK also has its hard time for whatever reasons so I wouldn't mind working anywhere but of course, apart from the salary, I could draw with education and experiences because I also have a plan in the future maybe to become a lecturer.

L: That's good. Do you want to study PhD then?

A: Yes, that's something I want to do even my mom has been telling me that one day you can become a say I have this called teasing me become like a professor. Because during my free time before I came to this country, I was giving basic IELTS class to some of the students in my country who want to travel abroad since I managed to get a good score.

L: What score did you get?

A: 8.

L: 8? Almost like the full mark.

A: Yea, I have made a very silly mistake that I realised after I came out.

L: So it's just one mistake, isn't it?

A: No. Because I got 8 in all except speaking, I got 7.5 because I felt nervous. I don't know I feel nervous sometimes. So I think I made maybe three mistakes in each... But since I study my entire life English so that was easier for me to prepare for the test.

L: That's great. Actually I have finished all the questions. Just want to ask you a general feeling or thoughts about your arrival here.

A: So when I first arrived in London this time. I didn't feel like I entered in the UK. I don't know why because I felt the airport was small, I felt that there were maybe a lot of.. I don't remember UK so because I came from a small town in the India, even the airport is much bigger than the London one.

L: Really?

A: Not bigger in size but there are flights flew out and there are international flights. When I had come to London, I have to take another flight to Newcastle and my flight was in the morning and we arrived at London at late night. So my father and I thought we would spent time at the airport but we didn't know that part of the airport closes, you know, so there were very few people at the entire airport. We have to wait at the British Airway's terminal because it's a local flight. So there were very few people so we found the first class there was a room but there are more activities in my country. I did not expect to because London is a big city and busy throughout but they don't have flights between 12 midnight, 11pm until 6am for the domestic flights. Once I reached Newcastle, you got the feeling that you are in the UK because of the



atmosphere, the feels and when I was landing, I looked out of window, everything looks very British, the houses. That's another reason why I chose it because at the same time the city is not alone, in the middle of nowhere, at the same time, it's not like a busy city like Birmingham or London.

L: Yea, you got everything you want but not that busy.

A: Correct. So that was another reason why I chose Newcastle.