

Turning Unfamiliar, Familiar: Cross-Cultural Experiences of Exchange Students in Southeast Asia

Arturo, Rey M., Dolido, Simber Joy A., Barbon, Kate C., Clavines, Jorence D., Ganila, Leann Claire N., Tupaz, Rodelio G., & Arturo, Rosabeth M.

Guimaras State University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600719>

Received: 10 June 2026; Accepted: 15 June 2026; Published: 04 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural exchange refers to interactions and phenomena between or across people or groups of different cultural backgrounds with the aim of providing important spaces for global interaction and understanding. This study understood and narrated the cross-cultural experiences of teacher education exchange students in teaching practicum in Vietnam and Indonesia. The study used a qualitative narrative inquiry methodology to obtain data from a sample of ten Filipino exchange students in Vietnam and Indonesia by conducting semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the data by following the approach of Braun and Clarke. The cross-cultural experiences of exchange students revealed four main themes: (1) Discovering cultural diversities, with subthemes (a) cultural traditions and religious practices, and (b) religious pursuit; (2) Navigating an unfamiliar culture, from the subthemes (a) loss in translation, and (b) building sweet spicy tolerance; (3) Adapting to the unfamiliar, with subthemes (a) aid of language learning application, (b) mental resilience, and (c) buddy system; and (4) Empowering pathways from the subthemes (a) financial security, and (b) emotional support network. Therefore, the cross-cultural experiences of exchange students are becoming familiar with the unfamiliar cultures, and this process is an exploration of culture, adaptation, and growth, marked by challenges, coping mechanisms, and support networks. These experiences showed that cultural exchange is truly an opportunity to build resilience, openness, and global understanding. This study suggested support for exchange students for both services and cultural orientation.

Keywords: Narrative inquiry, cross-cultural adaptation, exchange students, experiences

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In a world where globalization and interconnectedness are becoming a reality, cross-cultural experiences, which can be defined as the interactions between individuals or groups of people with different cultural backgrounds, are one of the pillars of establishing mutual understanding and reciprocal global respect. Academic mobility in the form of student exchange programs is one of the most dynamic vehicles that are propelling this global integration. In this movement, the participants usually temporarily leave behind their social support systems and their known cultural settings to immerse themselves in the foreign host countries. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) cites the fact that one of the most noticeable changes in the modern higher education is the fact that the mobility of learners across regional boundaries is growing at an extremely rapid pace. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics empirically captures this demand by reporting a five-year growth in the number of foreign university enrollments of Southeast Asian students by about 15 percent.

Nevertheless, the departure from a home country compels people to experience the non-linear process of acculturation, in which the constant direct experience of different cultural groups is bound to change the initial cultural paradigms. The available literature supports the fact that this transition is multifaceted and complicated, and it is characterized by a drastic swing between the most positive interactions and specific negative cultural friction. The human instinct to achieve a balance in the environment in the presence of adversarial conditions is

what cross-cultural adaptation, as framed by Kim (2008), expresses. Past studies have determined that the greater the adaptation, the more likely international scholars will be able to overcome social isolation and interact more effectively with host communities. In that regard, host-national connectivity and friendship networks have been found to be the most feasible buffers to reduce the stress of transition, whereas digital tools are also becoming recognized as mediums of coping to avoid extreme daily communication failures.

Studies show that for each localized Southeast Asian context, the experience of adaptation for international students is pre-determined and a direct result of the strong interactions between the language friction, social adaptation, and the support systems. As an example, Maguundayao (2018) pointed out that inbound international students in the Philippines have to overcome bad weather and food changes before overcoming the initial culture shock to achieve functional mastery. On the same note, studies on Chinese undergraduates studying in the Philippines identified isolation of living conditions and interpersonal communication as the main structural barriers. On the positive side of cross-cultural continuums, research conducted locally with high school exchange students in the Philippines revealed that there were notable improvements in the students' cultural awareness, patience, and less prejudice following the immersion.

Although this literature on international education is increasingly growing, there is a very narrow research gap on intra-regional outbound mobility in Southeast Asia, specifically on the movement of Filipino pre-service teachers to their neighboring countries. A lot of the existing literature deals with students who are leaving Asia for Western institutions or foreigners entering the Philippines. The accounts of Filipino students who travel within the ASEAN region alone are largely undocumented. These stories need to be explored since the geographical proximity of a region tends to give a false impression of cultural familiarity, which may hide a lot of underlying tension.

Objectives of the Study

To address this gap, this qualitative narrative inquiry explored the live cross-cultural experiences, challenges, and opportunities experienced by one of the batches of SEA-Teacher Student Exchange participants from A university in Western Visayas during their deployment in Vietnam and Indonesia. Specifically, this study answered the cross-cultural experiences of exchange students.

Theoretical Framework

The constructivist paradigm underlies this study- that is, it is consistent with the claim of Crotty (1998), who states that people create meaning through their interaction with the world and do not find it. Within this general paradigm, the plot of the story on how the students become familiar with the unfamiliar is examined under a synthesized and multi-lens perspective by which cognitive, physiological, and emotional adjustment are systematically tracked. First, the theory of symbolic interactionism is applied to show how the students develop personal definitions of what it means by self and respect as they engage daily in Vietnam and Indonesia with foreign practices, visual images, and religious procedures. Second, the experiential learning theory (ELT) of Kolb (1984) assumes the ongoing construction of knowledge through the physical process of changing experience. The first points of friction that students experienced in this inquiry, e.g., the removal of footwear and the adjustment to drastic changes in diet, were the concrete experiences that provoked the emergence of reflective observation, which eventually produced developed global competencies. Third, to determine the behavioral equilibrium, the transactional model of stress and coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) can be used to explain that learners actively evaluate unfavorable language barriers and dietary discomfort as a threat to the environment. This lens explains the shift of panic to mastery as the participants used digital translation applications as problem-focused coping and internal patience as emotion-focused coping. Lastly, the hierarchy of needs developed by Maslow (1962) is important as an academic assessment of the structural effectiveness of the academic program. This synthesis reveals the necessity of more holistic institutional scaffolding of academic mobility systems by demonstrating that the ability of students to achieve maximum academic self-actualization was actively constrained by unmet physiological and safety needs (in the form of dietary difficulties and financial insecurities).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cross-Cultural Experiences and Adaptation

International education efforts focus heavily on creating global citizens. As noted by Wilson (1993), for students to take off their own country's metaphorical glasses and look at the world from multiple perspectives, they must directly interact with diverse international populations. Examining the qualitative, lived narratives of these interactions is one of the most effective tools for researchers seeking to isolate the exact pain points that international students undergo. Previous studies have established that cross-cultural experiences are deeply multifaceted, featuring a non-linear oscillation between highly positive interactions and extreme negative cultural friction.

Kim (1988) first identified cross-cultural adaptation as an internal process that involves multiple steps and changes. Every person will have at some point during their lives when they feel unable to function and join in with the rest of life. Activities in an extremely strange setting. Adaptation functions as a natural tendency to react to imbalance within by trying to balance out adversarial environmental parameters. This fine balancing act between internal and external factors, whether or not a student becomes ill, will depend on the student's mental state and external physical surroundings. successfully assimilates or burns out.

Navigating Academic Mobility

Berry (1997) states that exchange students need to shed their identity as a United States citizen temporarily and their entire social safety net (family, friends, established routines) to enter host countries with all different social rules and cultural values. This forces them to be acculturated (as defined by Redfield et al., 1936), an ongoing direct interaction among different cultural groups that leads to the creation of variations from the norm of the original cultural patterns.

There are benefits to exchange programs, but they are inflexible. Usually, sending institutions have a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) requirement or strict language requirement checks, benchmarks, prior to outbound travel. Moreover, bilateral university contracts usually require a reciprocal number of students to maintain sustainability. If a sending school fails to meet its commitment to students, the agreement faces the prospect of being canceled, which would cause huge administrative strain on the students participating.

Contextualizing Local and Foreign Inquiries

The results from the Philippines are similar to international studies. Maguundayao (2018) pointed out that international students who are studying in college are concerned about the same. The Philippines has been found to be highly affected by socio-economic status, pre-departure language barriers, and preparation levels. He followed students as they went by. The first stage is the (1) honeymoon stage (all things are exciting) and frustration; (2) the culture shock stage, which is very frustrating; (3) the adjustment stage, in which norms are normalized; and finally (4), the mastery stage resulting in functional confidence. Bautista et al. (2023) conducted their study on the Taiwanese students in the Philippines. Based on a holistic and multi-dimensional approach, it was concluded that when designing international curricula, universities should always consider the following factors.

A comprehensive approach should be maintained. This means physical infrastructure, there were local Buddy systems, and local translation mechanics are needed to guarantee academic competency. Research carried out by Shu et al. (2020) focused on an external perspective, network characteristics, and perceived social support among international/ foreign students. The research was conducted with 276 foreign learners, and findings validated that institutions, family, and localized friends directly impact interactional and school-related adjustments. When social support is high, the negative aspects of culture are lessened, and shock drops significantly. Likewise, Chaiyasat (2020) has assessed the French students acclimating to Thai culture, deciding that they were only a little bit fluent in Thai, which caused significant communication difficulties. The digital signal is, however, present; translation applications and local active buddy systems served as strong buffers in opposition to extreme cultural isolation.

METHODS

Research Design

The researchers employed a qualitative design to reveal the richness of the experiences of the participants, namely, they conducted the study based on a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is concerned with getting, making sense of, and then making retrospective reflections on the chronological lived experiences as well as personal narratives of people within a specified duration of time. Since conventional quantitative methodologies would turn these highly personal stories into a lifeless set of numbers, narrative methods were employed to preserve the emotionality and subjective verisimilitude of the respondents.

Participants

The study participants included ten (10) exchange students of A university in Western Visayas who comprised one of the batches of the Southeast Asian Teacher (SEA-Teacher) program. These students did their specialized teaching practicum at one of the universities in Vietnam or Indonesia. The participants were in their early 20s and were in their 4th year of undergraduate studies. Most of them were females and majored in Teacher Education, such as English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and General Education.

Data Collection

The researchers developed a semi-structured questionnaire that would serve as a general framework for the in-depth data collection. This tool included a combination of open-ended questions on the demographic backgrounds, first points of cultural friction, emotional responses, and coping mechanisms. The questionnaire was subjected to stringent validation procedures by the educational research professionals, and the responses were taken into consideration during the final drafting of the interviews. Information was gathered through face-to-face and one-on-one recorded interviews, and this makes it absolutely accurate during the process of transcription.

Data Analysis

Interpretations of the transcribed data were done using thematic Analysis. Namely, the researchers applied the six-step approach that is used worldwide according to the thematic analysis method introduced by Braun and Clarke (2022): getting acquainted with the data, creating codes, coming up with themes, revising the themes, conceptualizing and naming the themes, and finding examples. The data were stored in the language used during the interview to make sure that the essence of the emotion and the desired meaning of the speech of the students was not lost in translating it prior to assessment.

Ethical Considerations

Strict ethics were applied in the study following the principles of benevolence, non-maleficence, justice, and integrity. The students were requested to give permission formally, consent was obtained, and complete confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms.

RESULTS

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the lived cross-cultural histories of teacher education exchange students from a university in Western Visayas participating in one of the batches of the SEA-Teacher program across Vietnam and Indonesia. Following Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic protocols, line-by-line Analysis of the stories shared by the participants yielded a four-part chronological story arc representing their collective journey: "Turning Unfamiliar, Familiar".

The thematic Analysis yielded four macro-level themes that chronicled the sequential emotional journey of the exchange students from initial shock to ultimate mastery.

The themes are: (1) discovering cultural diversities, (2) navigating unfamiliar culture, (3) adapting to the unfamiliar, and (4) empowering pathways.

Cross-Cultural Experiences of Exchange Students

Theme 1: Discovering Cultural Diversities

- A. Cultural and Traditional Practices
- B. Religious Pursuit

Theme 2: Navigating Unfamiliar Culture

- A. Loss in Translation
- B. Building Sweet and Spicy Tolerance

Theme 3: Adapting to the Unfamiliar

- A. Aid of Language Learning App
- B. Mental Resilience
- C. Buddy System

Theme 4: Empowering Pathways

- A. Financial Security
- B. Emotional Support Network

Theme 1. Discovering Cultural Diversities

The meta-narrative starts at the entrance point. To the participants, entering Vietnam and Indonesia was tantamount to crossing unseen yet very strict cultural borders that defined the life of communities.

Cultural traditions and religious practices

When they reached their respective foreign institutions, the participants were faced with observable cultural norms that valued hygiene and reverence, which were a direct threat to their home practices. Both Vietnamese and Indonesian cultures have strong customs of taking off shoes before entering sacred areas, classes, and personal institutions. This is a physical adaptation that was observed by participant 1:

“Another observation was the culture of taking off slippers or shoes before entering the stores, which we also adopted and left our footwear outside the stores as a sign of respect and cleanliness... This is a demonstration of how we value their culture.”

In Indonesia, the physical expression of high regard for the elders also took the form of the Salim tradition, which was a gesture that resembled the Filipino *pagmamano*. These daily habits demanded constant motor adjustment, and it was the first step at all in which the unknown started to assume a familiar form.

Religious pursuit.

The second environmental change that was registered in the accounts of the participants was spirituality and organized religious timetables. The students soon observed that in Vietnam and Indonesia, the flow of daily life was determined by spiritual observations. Instead of considering them as distractions, participants noted that

these ubiquitous environmental cues of faith were important chances to engage in internal reflection and cross-cultural investigation.

Theme 2. Navigating Unfamiliar Cultures

With the first narrative arc of excitement worn out, the narrative of Turning Unfamiliar, Familiar, passed into its second, most turbulent phase: the physiological and communicative grit of bare survival.

Loss in Translation

The wall that was the most physically and emotionally demanding to the participants was the one that focused on linguistics. Although students had high expectations of the utility of English in the Philippines, they soon found out that the local community members, school vendors, as well as transit operators had very low English proficiency. Participant 5 described the shock of this breakdown in communication immediately:

“On arrival, I was surprised that we could not communicate with them since they had poor English; they could not speak English, all they knew in the Vietnamese language were simple greetings... when we arrived, we could not communicate with them since they could not speak English.”

Participant 2 stressed the fact that this communicative failure had crippled the survival of the baselines and their daily navigation:

“I have trouble, I want to go outside the school where we are staying. I want to buy something, buy food outside, do my groceries, or buy something. It is hard because even the vendors cannot speak English.”

Building sweet spicy tolerance

Food was the most corporeal and the most common arena of acculturative fatigue besides speech. The participants found out that the level of tolerance to heat and sugar was completely different in other countries. In Indonesia, schoolchildren had to endure the scorching, incessant heat of chili sambal sauce. Participant 7 recorded:

“My favorite was spicy foods, but they are too spicy to my liking, I cannot take it, and note, they have sambal every day.”

On the other hand, students in Vietnam were overloaded with the huge quantity of sugar used in savory cooking at the base. To Filipino students accustomed to savory or sour viands, a sweet dinner was a sensory shock.

Theme 3. Adapting to the Unfamiliar

The most dramatic moment in the story is not the hardships that the students had to endure, but rather the dynamic means and attitudes they used in order to stay alive.

Aid of language learning application.

Participants relied heavily on modern technology in order to get back a feeling of localized independence and avoid the absence of English speakers. Google Translate turned into a literal life-saving tool. The app was the active channel that allowed keeping in touch with students whenever they had to complete simple purchases or talk to locals.

Mental Resilience.

Of course, conflict with a foreign culture will necessarily result in either external resentment or internal development. The latter was done deliberately by the participants. Students noted that instead of faulting the locals because they could not speak English, they realized that the hosts were making equal efforts to speak to

them. They cultivated an internal stress level by creating a deep level of patience and sustained positivity, thus lowering their level of internal stress.

The Buddy System.

The assigned student buddy was the most viable safety net available by the receiving institutions. These native students were like translators, guides, and emotional guardians. Participant 5 pointed out the enormous feeling of security that human dependency offers:

"Our buddy was our guide when we first ventured into the area, and we, as a group of exchange students, ensured that we never walked alone or wandered around alone. At least we were sure we were not alone because we had others around."

Theme 4. Empowering Pathways

To make students complete success in the exchange program without living in a state of constant survival-related anxiety, localized support services and external safety nets were in high demand to complete the narrative of "Turning Unfamiliar, Familiar."

Financial Security.

One of the issues raised by a number of participants was the fear of dealing with currency changes and meeting unexpected local living costs. According to the participants, their psychological well-being was directly affected by the financial aid or stipend that the sending authorities assigned to them. Financial security in totality implied that the students could eliminate baseline survival fears in order to devote their complete attention to their teaching practicum.

Emotional Support Network.

Although physically separated from their main social safety nets, students still had digital connections with their families and continued communication channels with their mentoring professors at a university in Western Visayas. Access to ongoing moral support served as the final lifeline that did not allow them to give in to intense homesickness.

DISCUSSION

The cross-cultural experience of the exchange students is best narrated in the 'turning unfamiliar, familiar,' which narrates the experience from unfamiliar cultures to familiar cultures. This story tells the threshold of awe (discovering cultural diversities), the friction of survival (navigating unfamiliar cultures), the turning point of being familiar (adapting to the unfamiliar), and the empowered master student (empowering pathways)

The Threshold of Awe (Discovering Cultural Diversities)

The practice of removing footwear represents a physical boundary crossing for a Filipino learner. In the Philippines, removing shoes is a gesture reserved strictly for the intimacy of a private household. Realizing that institutions and businesses demanded this same level of intimacy meant that students had to break their own subconscious motor routines actively.

Looking through the operational lens of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), the removal of shoes served as the foundational "Concrete Experience". The participants did not just read about the cultural custom in a book; they were forced to physically perform it. This triggered Kolb's stage of "Reflective Observation," wherein students stopped seeing the action as a simple rule and recognized it as a profound symbolic representation of cleanliness and community respect.

Mundane lifestyle actions rapidly become loaded with massive cultural significance, yielding what literature cataloged as intercultural sensitivity. Wilson (1993) famously described this as the skill of learners to "take off their own country's glasses" and look at the world from multiple perspectives.

The Friction of Survival (Navigating Unfamiliar Cultures)

Language functions as the bedrock of human connection. When the participants arrived and realized English was strictly unusable for survival activities outside the university gates, they experienced immediate environmental alienation. Similarly, food provides the most basic human anchor to reality. A continuous diet of extreme heat or sugar is not just a preference issue—it becomes a source of physical pain and visceral exhaustion for a student whose body is not adapted to those ingredient tolerances.

This environmental pushback perfectly showcases the **Transactional Model of Stress and Coping** developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The external stimulus (a lack of shared language and indigestible food) acted as the stressor. The participants' appraisal labeled these situations as an active threat to their baseline comfort. Their physical reactions—feelings of shock, fear, and frustration—were the natural psychological fallout of unmediated cultural stressors.

Language friction is consistently documented as the single largest obstacle across all international academic mobility literature. Previous local research by Maguddayao (2018) on foreign students in the Philippines indicated that poor food conditions and severe communication breakdowns are standard triggers of the "culture shock" stage. This is mirrored internationally by Chaiyasat (2020), who argued that language limitations effectively threaten a student's ability to create deep local peer networks, yielding severe loneliness if left unattended.

The Turning Point (Adapting to the Unfamiliar)

Rather than giving in to isolating impulses or yielding to self-doubt, students sought out active solutions. Technology became the great equalizer. By turning to digital translation, students artificially bypassed the language barrier, reclaiming a sense of independence and agency in public spaces. Moreover, shifting their internal perspective to empathize with the locals displayed highly advanced emotional maturity for undergraduate students.

Under the Transactional Stress Model, the use of Google Translate serves as "Problem-Focused Coping". The students could not magically teach the local vendors English, so they manipulated their interaction with the environment by deploying a third-party tool to solve the practical barrier. Conversely, practicing patience and maintaining an internal positive mindset represents "Emotion-Focused Coping". When the problem itself cannot be easily solved, changing the internal perception of the problem reduces the overall psychological weight.

The absolute reliance on localized human connections (the buddy system) stands as the single most critical discovery of this study, directly agreeing with international metrics. Research tracking academic mobility by Bethel et al. (2020) found that host-national connectedness serves as the strongest predictor of positive psychological adaptation. This is mirrored by Chaiyasat (2020), who proved that localized buddy networks provided the definitive bridge between isolation and ultimate cultural mastery.

The Empowered Master Student (Empowering Pathways)

International travel inherently breeds economic stress. Drastic shifts in currency values and unexpected living costs can deplete a student's resources. Having access to continuous financial security and a steady emotional lifeline to mentors back home ensures that students are physically and emotionally free to concentrate on the demanding task of foreign student teaching.

Analyzing these narratives through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs yields a powerful critique of educational mobility programs. Maslow dictated that a strict tier of needs drives human beings. If basic physiological needs (food) and safety needs (financial security) are left entirely unmet, a student cannot successfully transition to

higher tiers of belongingness, self-esteem, or self-actualization. Continuous academic performance requires that the institutions systematically remove baseline environmental threats.

The work of Shu et al. (2020) heavily supported the idea that institutional care, combined with family check-ins, acts as a primary stress buffer. Academic mobility programs cannot rely solely on the bravery of the students; they demand active financial and emotional investment from the sending universities to guarantee a successful outcome.

Limitations and Future Scope

This narrative inquiry relied strictly on the qualitative experiences of ten teacher education students representing a highly specific geographic demographic in the Philippines. At the same time, deep and expressive, qualitative narratives cannot represent localized data across massive outbound student frameworks. Future inquiries should execute mixed-methods approaches, processing data from diverse academic disciplines across several sending institutions to quantify specific stress indices.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study show a transformative process in the academic mobility students' cross-cultural experience, from the first shock of being far from home to becoming truly global. Participants have to endure unfamiliar sacred procedures, strict religious schedules, and extreme changes in diet. But the visceral culture shocks are effective as major growth catalysts, calling learners to increase their intercultural sensitivity. In coping with these challenges, students effectively employed "active agency" in the process that involved digital translation software and their own inner psychological strength. To address the challenges, learners dealt with them successfully by combining digital translation software with their internal emotional strength, so as to achieve "active agency" in the translation process. The local buddy system was then utilized as a last line of communication to the community, and isolated students could confidently participate in community activities. Lastly, there was a structural imbalance in relation to the support offered: while hosting institutions competently organized physical matters, there was no pre-departure cultural training and inadequate financial support from the sending institutions, which caused baseline survival anxieties.

Based on these results, it is highly recommended that sending universities require the compulsory and local conversational language workshop and financial stipend before leaving for a foreign country. Home-university mentors must maintain a digital lifeline with traveling scholars at least weekly, in order to ensure their psychological security. At the same time, recipient institutions are encouraged to institutionalize the training of student buddies to help in the non-academic survival activities, such as grocery shopping and dietary navigation. Lastly, future researchers are advised to apply this narrative model to bring back and observe students as they return to their own countries as professional classroom teachers, and examine how their international mobility affects their classroom work formally.

REFERENCES

1. Atalar, A. (2019). Student exchange: A sustainable model. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23(3), 323–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315319835534>
2. Bautista, R., Arceo, J., & Tamayo, M. (2023). Perception of the participating international students at the university from Taiwan on academic, social, and personal factors localized in the Philippines. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 10(2), 145–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102145>
3. Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>
4. Bethel, A., Ward, C., & Fetvadjeiev, V. H. (2020). Predictive model of psychological adaptation with international students: Host national connectedness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 51(6), 467–483. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022120932567>

5. Borres, K., Macalalag, J., & Lopez, R. (2023). Attitudes and cultural competence among secondary exchange students and Filipino host families: A study on AFS intercultural exchange. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 6(2), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v6i2.712>
6. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
7. Chaiyasat, S. (2020). Language limitations and friendship networks affecting French students' socio-cultural adjustment in Thailand. *Journal of Asian Education*, 21(1), 12–25. <https://doi.org/10.14456/jae.2020.2>
8. Conner, D. S., & Roberts, T. G. (2015). The multifaceted nature of student international experiences. *Journal of International Students*, 5(1), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v5i1.442>
9. Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Allen & Unwin.
10. Deni, A. (2021). Adjustment experiences of academically successful international students in learning in a private Malaysian higher education institution. *International Journal of Education*, 14(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v14i2.28456>
11. Kim, Y. Y. (1988). *Contexts of cross-cultural adaptation*. Hampton Press.
12. Kim, Y. Y. (2008). Toward intercultural capability: A cross-cultural adaptation perspective. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 17, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v8i2.464>
13. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.
14. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
15. Leng, J. (2022). Intercultural adaptation of Chinese undergraduates in the Philippines. *Journal of Language and Cultural Studies*, 4(2), 54–68. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jlcts.2022.4.2.6>
16. Maguaddayao, R. (2018). Social lived experiences and coping mechanisms of foreign students in the Philippines: A phenomenological approach to intercultural communicative competence. *The Normal Lights*, 12(2), 154–179. <https://doi.org/10.56278/tnl.v12i2.1121>
17. Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. Van Nostrand. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10793-000>
18. Pinamang, A., Ansah, A., & Owusu, E. (2021). Extent of social support, psychological adjustment, and acculturative stress among international students. *Journal of International Students*, 11(S2), 102–119. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11iS2.3572>
19. Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, 38(1), 149–152. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1936.38.1.02a00330>
20. Shu, F., Ahmed, S. F., Pickett, M. L., Ayman, R., & McAbee, S. T. (2020). Social support perceptions, network characteristics, and international student adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74, 136–148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.11.002>
21. Wilson, A. (1993). Take off your country's glasses: A global perspective in education. *Social Education*, 57(6), 318–321.
22. Wu, H., Garza, E., & Guzman, N. (2015). International students' challenge and adjustment to college. *Education Research International*, 2015, Article 202753. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/202753>
23. Xiao, S. L., Bernardo, A. B. I., & Padilla, J. L. (2019). Polyculturalism is an intergroup ideology for the cultural adjustment of international students at the University of Macau. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 12(4), 312–322. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000099>