

Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The business world is becoming increasingly globalized. It is important that business graduates possess the knowledge and skills to interact competently with people from different cultures in the workplace. Higher education environment provides an ideal setting for students to interact with students from other cultures which can facilitate intercultural learning and development. The objective of this exploratory study is to understand the factors that influence intercultural competence, which in turns may affect the quality of intercultural interaction and learning experience in higher education context. In-depth interviews are conducted with business undergraduates and graduates at a large university in Hong Kong, China to explore their perceived level of intercultural competence and their views, thoughts and feelings about interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. The interviews are conducted via an online platform and open-ended questions are used. The findings will be useful for education practitioners to design classroom intervention strategies, courses and programs to enhance development of intercultural competence.

Keywords: Intercultural learning; business undergraduates; in-depth interviews