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**研究論文**

# **Re-Imaging ‘integration’ and ‘interactions’, reflections from a community summer program for international and domestic students in Taiwan**

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## **Abstract**

Drawing from a university summer program that involved international and domestic students participated together to experience and strengthen the relationship between them and children from a local community. In particular, this study re-images the social interaction and integration, cross-cultural transition and friendship development of International and domestic students after working together in a shared role. The findings include a number of salient themes emerged from qualitative data analysis and tubular charts analysis from likert-scale questionnaires. We highlighted only a select number of narratives that best reflect each theme and offer insights regarding the factors that impact the participation of international and domestic students. The main themes include social integration and interaction, cross-cultural transition and friendship development.

**Keywords: Integration, Cross-cultural transitions, International students, Community, University Social Responsibility (USR).**

# 台灣在學國際大學生的融合互動：以 大學暑期社區服務為例

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## 中文摘要

國際化是台灣高等教育近年來大力倡導的大學發展方向。然而國際化的歷程牽涉到許多的層面，需要從最基礎的學生國際流動及本國學生與國際學生的互動汲取經驗探索文化交流與融合的場域及策略。本研究以一個暑期本地與國際學生共同籌辦的社區兒少生活營隊過程，究嘗試透過此營隊的跨文化合作探討在地與國際大學生之間的互動融合之形式，跨文化交流與情誼發展。本研究方法以質性訪談及李克特量表式的問卷調查彙整參與者的經驗與意見，根據上述的統計與訪談資料分析，提出一些顯著的意見與主題。研究顯示本地學生與國際生在此社區營隊活動中關注的重點不同，研究也發現，儘管語言的障礙仍待未來以各種方式提早準備以克服，但跨文化交流與情誼發展是本活動重要的成果。

**關鍵字：**融合，跨文化交流，國際大學生，社區，大學社會責任

## **1.Introduction**

### **1-1. Research background**

The relationship between domestic and international students is an important aspect in the study abroad experience because of its effects on the satisfaction levels of international students. Research has shown that a good relationship between domestic and international students leads to high satisfaction (Gareis, 2012; Gareis, Merkin and Goldman, 2011). Most research on the experiences of international and domestic students has focused on English-speaking host countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and some Asian countries, such as China, Singapore, Japan, and Korea, that have developed economies since many international students have studied in these countries. However, parallel to social and economic developments throughout the world, regional higher education hubs have emerged in different destinations.

The Taiwanese government has a prominent desire to promote its higher education by opening doors of opportunities to international students who would like to further their education abroad. A 2012 report from the University World News<sup>1</sup> states that Taiwan plans to increase the number of international students in its higher educational institutions from 40,000 in 2012 to 150,000 by 2020 (Pare and Tsay, 2012). Following the same vein, most of the Taiwanese universities (including Chang Jung Christian University here in after referred to as CJCU) host international students especially who come to Taiwan to pursue a higher education in different disciplines. This increasing number of international students in Taiwan higher education demonstrates that Taiwan can be regarded as an attractive higher education option in Asia and can serve as an alternative to popular higher education destinations.

## 1-2. Scope of Research

In 2018, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan officially launched the Higher Education Cultivation Project, which fulfills Social Responsibility as one of its four major goals. The purpose of the University Social Responsibility Projects (USR Projects) is to align universities with the future development directions of higher education, i.e. developing greater diversity and cultivating high-quality talents. The aims here are to strengthen universities' local connections, encourage teachers/students to meet their social responsibilities, and assist universities in developing students' individual characteristics. The core values of the USR Projects are local connections and talent cultivation, which provide universities with a people-orientated approach and a focus on local needs to meet their social responsibilities through assisting in solving regional problems with humanistic concerns.

The Centre for Social Empowerment Taiwan (COSET) in CJKU has grown in partnership with the USR to set up various projects that will achieve the USR's main goals. The project we are looking forward to in this study is one that has involved domestic and international students participating together in strengthening the relationship between them and children from a local community here in this study referred as Liugui. There's a significant impact when domestic and international students are tasked together. The study of Arkoudis et al. (2013) showed the potential benefit of peer interaction across diverse cultural and linguistic groups. Both the staff and students interviewed stated interaction among students from diverse backgrounds can potentially lead to: increased awareness and understanding of different perspectives; better preparation for the workplace; improved English language skills for international students; and a greater feeling of belonging (Arkoudis and Baik, 2014). This study aimed to re-images the social interaction and integration, cross-cultural transition and friendship development of International and

domestic students after working together in a shared role. The findings include a number of salient themes emerged from qualitative data analysis (Interviews) and tubular charts analysis from likert-scale questionnaires. Analysis process has highlighted only a selected number of narratives that best reflect each theme and offer insights regarding the factors that impact the participation of international and domestic students in a summer program. This purpose of this study is summarized in the following three sub-objectives:

- To understand the cross-cultural transition, interaction, friendship development and social integration of International and domestic students in a shared role
- To document the process of establishing an intercultural program for domestic and international students associated with activities that involves the community;
- To explore the adjustment needs and experiences of university students in a summer program that involves the local community.

## **2.Literature review**

### **2-1. Integration**

The term integration is somewhat nebulous, although there is agreement amongst authors that it is a multifaceted and multidimensional term. For example, Spencer-Oatey, Dauber and Williams (2014) maintains that this term has multiple dimensions such as the process of getting people of different races to live and work together instead of separately; spending time with members of other groups and to develop habits like theirs; combining two or more people so that they work together effectively; and people becoming part of a group or society and being accepted by them. These elements suggest a dynamic, ongoing process which individuals and

larger communities engage in. The study Young et al. (2014) have taken this further by defining integration as an intentional process to create community, by encouraging domestic and international students to engage with each other in ongoing interaction, characterized by mutual respect, responsibility, action, and commitment. Other researchers highlighted the importance of social integration, by suggesting that higher education is more likely to persist in students who make cultural connections by social groups expressing their culture of origin. Although these groups can be decentralized and informal, universities can also encourage interaction and integration opportunities (Kuh and Love 2004; Haverila, Haverila, and McLaughlin, 2020).

Studies have shown that social life outside academic studies has a strong influence on academic integration (Rienties, Beausaert, Grohnert, Niemantsverdriet and Kommers, 2012); Van Mol and Michielsen 2014). According to Nilsson (2019) shows that participation in social activities can help address problems international students face; and, most importantly, successful social integration during their time abroad will hopefully translate into better academic performance and a comprehensive personal experience. After all, whereas a study by Rientis and Tempelaar (2013) showed that social adjustment is the primary predictor for academic success, another study Neri and Ville (2008) shows that, for international students, social capital is not associated with improved academic performance but rather with increased well-being. A study conducted in the US showed that International students also face significant challenges in adjusting and developing a sense of belonging on U.S. campuses often due to difficulties in acclimating to a new social life, potential language barriers, and limited knowledge of the new culture (Bentley, 2008).

## 2-2. Interaction

A recent study of Rivas, Burke and Hale (2019) shows that the degree of social interaction an international student establishes is an important variable in social connectedness and belonging, and culture influences how they view and approach connecting with others and social networking with American students. Trice (2004) concluded that, students who experience cultural differences can present difficulties establishing social network with Americans. Initiating interaction with peers is challenging for students, particularly when there is a lack of common ground in terms of cultural knowledge and experience. Peer interaction and engagement with the university can be particularly challenging for students for whom English is not a first language. These students may not only experience problems with language proficiency and communicative competence, they may also not have the adequate social and cultural “know-how” for informal and social interactions in various Australian contexts (Baik, 2013).

Researchers have offered a number of possible reasons for this lack of interaction between international and domestic students. Understandably, it seems that for the most part, students prefer to stay within familiar cultural and language groups. This is explained by Eisenclas and Trevaskes (2007, p.421) as “the phenomenon of social categorisation and perception” (p.421). Why social interactions among domestic and international students matters in a successfully study abroad experience? Hua and Gao (2021) showed that, study abroad is based on the premise that immersion contributes to intercultural and language performance, with a clear pedagogical preference for "real" experience. As this particular topic shows, moreover, the lived character of intercultural learning does not only mean that exposure does not suffice, but that we still have to redefine what success entails and to which. What counts is (e)changing views, addressing and focusing on disagreements and developing new ties with academic benefits.



Given the objectives of this study, the following are the research questions that have arisen;

- I. Is there any cross-cultural transition, interaction, friendship development and social integration between local and foreign students after working together in a shared role?
- II. Are there any benefits between college students interacting with the community in various activities especially to bring about the development of children?

### **3. Research Methods**

#### **3-1. Description of the study area**

Chang Jung Christian University (CJCU) is a private university located in southern Taiwan. The university was founded in 1992 but is the outgrowth of a vision that began more than one hundred years earlier with the founding of Chang Jung Senior High School, Taiwan's first western-style high school, in 1885. CJCU is a community of approximately 11,000 students and 350 faculty members who are eager to extend the warmth and hospitality of southern Taiwan to the rest of the world.

Liugui District is located in northeastern Kaohsiung City. According to Hakka Affairs Council (2020), it is situated at the junction of the Central Mountain Range's foothills and the Pingtung plain. It's known as the Liugui mantle belt. The narrow north-south terrain has the Laonong River flowing through it. On the west side of Laonong River is the Liugui river bank. The entire town is under the scope of the Maolin National Scenic Area.

### **3-2. Description of the Summer Program**

The summer program lasted for 11 days (28/7/2021-7/8/2021). It was scheduled from the very first stage of discussion in University Social Responsibility (USR) project. Liugui Caring Association have been organizing summer programs annually; each and every year they will have a main theme for the activity. The latter program, they intended to have fresh and new intellectuals to make the program more astonishing, thanks to the intervention of Chang Jung Christian University (CJCU), which will expand the experience of local children and also be linked to nature.

The two students (D1 & D2) remained at the center to facilitate the program. Students could also recognize or understand local culture more thoroughly. For the local children, they could introduce or present their own culture for others. The organizer also aims to have cross region or country culture interaction and exchange, which could broaden the local children and students' horizon at the same time. To integrate the needs of the community, CJCU planned to link the students (F1 & F2) from the department of international program for sustainable development (IPSD) and the students from the department of applied philosophy to their local culture, and to gain an understanding of nature and international culture. The community service program was a challenge to both department students due to culture variation, and they will need to deal with the same issue, such as activity planning while they are working together.

### **3-3. Data collection & interview process**

The instruments of this paper that researchers used to collect the data were through interviews and questionnaires. The survey questions were in a format of likert scale made from an online google form. According to Nemoto and Beglar,

(2014) likert-scale questionnaires are the most commonly used type of instrument for measuring affective variables such as motivation and self-efficacy, given that they allow researchers to gather large amounts of data with relative ease. An electronic link extracted from an online google form was sent directly to the students' participants with a brief description of the purpose of this study. In order to solicit their participation in this study, the students and all participants were told the purpose of this study and accepted to participate.

The type of interview that the researchers made was a qualitative interview. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019) states that a qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants through some open questions and record the answers. In addition, Indawan, Sulaiman and Susanti (2017) state that an interview is a technique of collecting the data through direct communication between the interviewer and the respondent. The interview for this study occurred in two phases. The first stage involved two students who participated in the summer program, among them one was a foreign student identified as F2 from Tanzania and one was a domestic student from Taiwan identified as D4 with confirmed enrollments in undergraduate courses at CJCU. The other session in stage one involved a community worker here in this paper identified as C1 from Liugui Caring Association who participated in the program. Based on feedback from C1 on how the children responded to this program, F2 was mentioned and was seen as an incentive for many children to learn how and how they ended up attempting to communicate. Therefore, F2 was proposed by the writers for the first stage of the interview to represent the foreign students. D4 was an exponential exchange for all students, D4 became a linguistic bridge for all students, it sought to translate Chinese and English, so that everyone could understand one another fluently. In this way D4 knew both parties and the authors chose her to represent the domestic students in the interview.

The second stage of the interview involved the CJCU's Professor and CEO from Department of Applied Philosophy here in this study he is identified as P2, and the CJCU's Dean office of global affairs identified as P1. P1 and P2 wasn't participate or organize the summer program, they were both contacted for the invitation to participate in the study, and were later approached for a face-to-face interview after they had agreed to do so. The participants who shared their reflections via a face-to-face interview were asked supplementary subsequent questions depending on the answers they provided from the questionnaire, the goal was to collect as much information as possible.

Each interview lasted from thirty to sixty minutes, and was conducted either in English, Chinese or Swahili, depending on whichever language the interviewee felt most comfortable with for conversation. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees, and transcribed immediately after the interview. During the recording, the statements made by the interviewees were briefly summarized or paraphrased back to them. The goal of such a procedure was to avoid misquoting the interviewee and to allow him or to verify and confirm that his or her statements could be used as data for this research. Besides, the interview process was recorded by audio recording in the consent of participants, a few notes were also taken during the interview.

### **3-4. Data analysis**

The transcripts were analyzed by using the coding method in a thematic analysis. The process occurred in different steps, step one involved reading the transcripts by quickly browsing through all transcripts as a whole, making notes about first impressions and reading the transcripts again one by one, carefully line by line. Step two involved labeling relevant words, phrases sentences or sections. Authors observed the labels about actions, activities, concepts, differences, opinions,

processes, or that was thought is relevant. And this process is called coding. Coding, is described as the simple operation of identifying segments of meaning in your data and labelling them with a code, which can be defined as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019; Saldaña, 2015). In Step 3 we selected which coded are the most important and create categories by bringing several codes together. Going through the codes we created in the previous step. Reading them with a pen in hand and create new codes by combing one or two codes. Authors kept the codes that are needed and developed themes. In Step 4 authors labeled the themes and decide which are the most relevant and how they are connected to each other.

**Table 1: Basic information of the study participants.**

<b>N0</b>	<b>Name Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>Prior activity</b>
1	F1	Male	Tanzania	International Student
2	D1	Male	Taiwan	Domestic Student
3	D2	Female	Taiwan	Domestic Student
4	F2	Male	Tanzania	International Student
5	D3	Male	Taiwan	Domestic Student
6	D4	Female	Taiwan	Domestic Student
7	D5	Male	Taiwan	Domestic Student
8	P1	Female	Taiwan	Professor
9	P2	Male	Taiwan	Professor
10	C1	Female	Taiwan	Community worker

Note: F means international students, D means Taiwanese students, P means Taiwanese professor, C means Taiwanese community worker

The tool used to analyze the questionnaire data was Microsoft excel and the data was categorized and presented in a tabular form for easy interpretations. The study examined the social integration & interaction, cross cultural transition and friendship development of the participants, values coding was used to “reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview” (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014, p.75). The codes were collapsed into similar categories and three themes emerged.

## **4.Results and Reflection**

### **4-1. From google online questionnaires represented with charts**

The anonymous questions were sent to the seven students participated in the summer program and all responded. They were three major questions and nine responses prepared via the google form for students to respond. Likert scale with five options was used in the responses. The first question asked; Results from likert-scale questionnaire, the tubular charts analysis that all participants (students) responded to the online questionnaire.

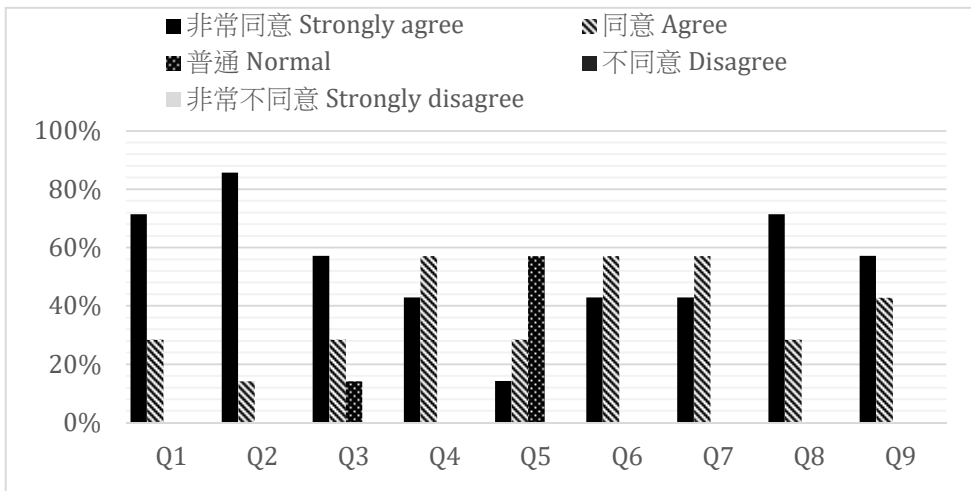
The charts showed that in all the questions they indeed demonstrated constructive responses to a significant percentage. Among the two key questions were to find the motivation and intentions of joining the program and to find out about what expectations they wanted to achieve after the program’s over. The responses indicated that students depended on good outcomes such as Traveling and visiting new places (86%) see figure 1. Interested in international or local culture (71%) and Learning how to work out of comfort zone (71%) see figure 1. Greater understanding of the culture growth of the children (71%) and understanding how to interact with people from different cultures (71%) see figure 2. To sum-up, none of the students responded to “disagree” or “strongly disagree” among all the questions.

These findings showed students with a state and a desire to learn, by that logic. Such a condition made them eager to broaden their ideas and perspectives to something that is pleasant and achieves the main objective of this study.

*“Why did you choose to participate in this particular program? Please read through each of the responses below and select a response which indicates how important that reason was to you. Reasons for your participation in a Youth Summer Program”.*

**Responses**

- Q1. Interested in international or local culture
- Q2. Travel and see new places
- Q3. Meeting students from another culture
- Q4. Increasing fluency in another language (Mandarin/English)
- Q5. Receive university credits
- Q6. Learning innovative ways by staying with the kids
- Q7. Learning how to be effective working with peers
- Q8. Learning how to work out of comfort zone
- Q9. Learning how to be a leader in the dynamic workplace



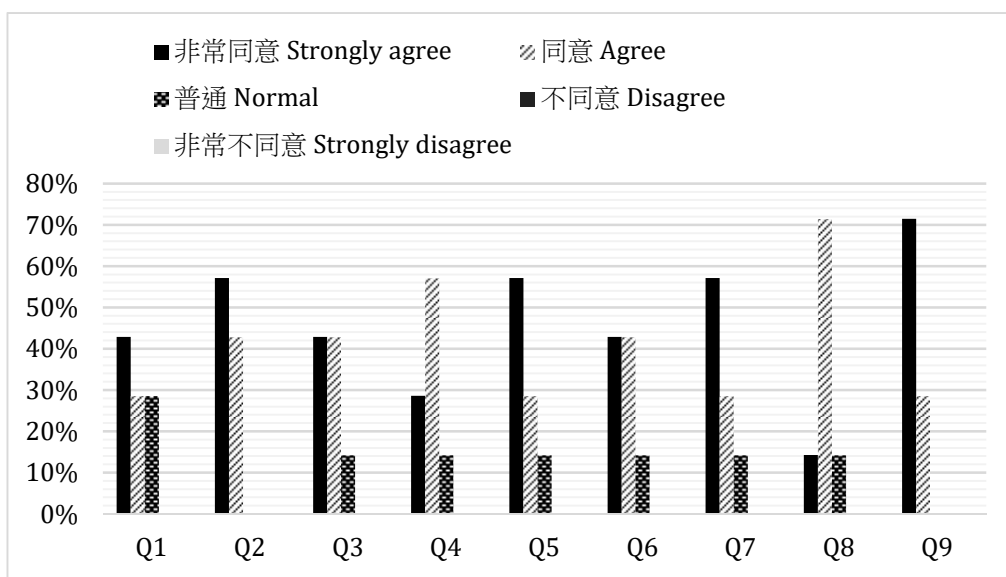
**Figure 1: Reasons for participated students organized Summer Program**

For the second question, students were asked;

*“To what extent do you think that participating in a particular program and engaging with students from a different culture perspective had an effect on your learning and your expectations for this summer program? Select a response which indicates how important that reason was to you”*

**Responses**

- Q1. Growth in interpersonal skills
- Q2. Learning and understanding other ways of seeing the world
- Q3. Growth in personal awareness
- Q4. Growth in maturity and self-confidence
- Q5. Work motivation in that specific shared role
- Q6. Increased ability to communicate in a foreign language
- Q7. Gain a different perspective on your culture
- Q8. Greater understanding of the culture growth of the children
- Q9. Understanding how to interact with people from different cultures



**Figure 2: The effect on participated students’ learning and expectations for this summer program**



## 4-2. From interview

A number of salient themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis. We highlight only a select number of narratives that best reflect each theme and offer insights regarding the factors that impact the participation of international students and domestic students. Likert- scale questionnaire showed an overall result from the participators, but this analysis, we narrow the result from the likert-scale questionnaire into different themes include social integration & interaction, cross-cultural transition and friendship development. This phase could help the paper restrict the scope and showed apparent results.

### Phase 2 Interview: F2 & D4

#### 4-2-1 Social Integration & interaction

##### a. Different culture students have different expectation in Taiwan community service

The program could be pursued by international students regardless of language barriers. It indicates clearly that both have integrated into and interacted with the assistance of aspects such as sessions with the kids. The interview revealed that both students took part in this program and had different goals. International students overwhelmed themselves with linguistic challenges. This clearly shows how domestic students and International have different priorities when participating in a program. Domestic students were concerned about the culture, food and community. This shows that language still plays an important role to understand someone's culture to facilitate interaction.

*“We only played games and followed the schedule because of language barriers”. (F2)*

*“The local food and people are nice, I think the community is left out of our sight, we should have more understanding of our community history or story”. (D4)*

**b. Culture difference leads both students to identify their own culture and challenges**

During the program both students experienced different perspectives; It was not easy for them to identify each other's culture, since they were more focused on maintaining their duty with the kids. Through both of their past experiences working in summer programs, D4 felt language is important for communication when it comes to cultural differences, while F2 is more concerned about the program schedule especially the kids. They both stood in their individual perspectives when we asked about the cultural difference they faced.

*“I think it is quite hard to translate directly, it is really difficult” (D4)*

*“During the program, a kid ended up refusing to participate, and the leaders found no problems, others ended up refusing to eat, but the local leaders consider this to be normal and accept the decisions of the child. For us students who refuse to eat, in Tanzania it is very different to why we have to follow him and ask him until the justification is clear. But in Tanzania there is an excuse for accepting it and there's some excuse we can decline, but on the food side, he must eat, because food is necessary. We do not give him freedom of everything. I recall, but they spoke to him in Chinese and I wouldn't know what the child gave as an excuse.” (F2)*

#### **4-2-2 Cross-Cultural transition**

**a. Both students receive different achievements while developing kids**

It became easier for D4 to engage with the children with ease of conversation, but it was not adequate excuse not to understand how as well as how to cope. During

the interview, F2 admired the schedule and wanted to use it as a strategy for some of those programs in his country. The nap culture after lunch, in school students and even workplaces, is commonly practiced in Taiwan. In that way F2 learned a different culture from Taiwan.

*“I don’t think I need to scold the kids and I will try to speak with them if they do something wrong. Also, I need to observe the kids to know more about their characters” (D4)*

*“I have learned Children want time to relax that you cannot just give them a schedule for everything”. (F2)*

#### **b. Positive interaction and communication**

Both are positive supportive of each other, besides working in a program, they are supportive of others even though they didn’t have enough communication. Also, they didn’t feel offended when they were helping each other, so we could assume they would have positive outcomes.

*“I felt good and interesting while I could express both of their ideas or also any reaction or feedback”. (D4)*

*“They were eager to support me in every way and supported me with 100%. They cared us in every situation”. (F4)*

### **4-2-3 Friendship development**

#### **a. Local children showed different reactions**

To those who can't communicate, they need to guess other feelings or emotions by their reaction or expression. In other words, they need to interpret someone with little context. From the interview, it shows how different they could understand others due to lack of information.

*“They were how I expected, so high and active” (D4)*

*“In the beginning it wasn't easy, but we hoped to achieve some guys, but it wasn't easy. We chose to pause and prepare, but some of them started approaching us and talking to us” (F4)*

**b. Community has received well feedbacks from kids**

A positive outcome, despite the many obstacles of communication, is the relationship between F2 and children. This shows that friendships and habit can only be brought on by actions irrespective of the language challenge.

*“Even though I didn't have much conversation with them, I still have some observation and conclusion toward their interaction. Some of the family isn't fully concerned about their kids, so in this program some of them were easily attached with the CJCUC students, they were so sad on the last day. So in the end of the event, there was a kid who said he wanted to go to America, because he assumed all foreigners came from America. The main point is that he wanted to visit F2”. (C1)*

**c. Strong bonds build after community service**

Throughout our interview we found, both of them have extended their relationship in their daily life. They start to greet each other when they meet, which is totally opposite to the responses they had before.

*“After this event I will always say hi to them when we pass by each other”. (D4)*

*“Before we met we were afraid to greet each other perhaps because of language challenges. But now we have left the challenges behind and care about our friendship”. (F2)*

**d. Both students came up different review**

In order to document the process of establishing an intercultural program for domestic and international students and explore the adjustment needs associated with activities that involve the local community. D4 is Taiwanese so she didn't have

a language barrier towards the event, and she neglected F2's challenge to participate as an international student. It shows that Taiwanese students also need to learn their culture from different places. International students cleared have no idea if Taiwanese they also have differences in their culture, D4 is more emphasized on the language barrier which is rarely a challenge for Taiwanese students.

*“I think we need to prepare well and have more understanding about the community, and we need to know the characters of the kids”. (D4)*

*“The first thing I'll do three months beforehand for example, I'll try very hard to learn the language”. (F2)*

We addressed and analyzed the key points of this study with people, in particular the Professors and organizers, knowledgeable in the actual theme and purpose, in order to achieve the core objectives of this study we reviewed to understand the cross-cultural transition, interaction, friendship development and social integration of International and domestic students. In the second Interview phase P2 among the organizer of this summer program and P1 who is the dean office of global affairs at CJCU, both were interviewed and replied to the following questions.

## **Phase 2 Interview: P1 & P2**

### **a. Both professors feel positive to have international interaction in community service**

P1 and P2 as a Taiwanese educators were both believe community service has been an important role to build cross-culture relationship. As an observer, both professors were encouraging domestic students to organize or participate more activities or program and working in a shared role with international students.

*“So I think it would be better for domestic students to have the experience to work with people from other countries, before they are involved in the carrier market. (P1)*

*“So in this context, both of the students will feel comfortable, they can start their conversation or interaction through their works. When they start working with each other then only they can have more understanding of others' character. For example, when they play board games they will realize that someone is so naive or smart”. (P2)*

**b. Both professors agreed there are advantages and significance for domestic students work with international students**

From the interview, both professors admit cross-culture interaction was a major key for the students to learn how to be sympathetic or considerable to others' situations. These attitudes or core values were essential for students by assisting them to step out of their comfort zones. Only when they stand out of their comfort zones, they could help each other and build long lasting friendships.

*“And if you would like to have good communication, you have to learn the cultures first of course. You have to know why they think the problem this way and why others think the problem that way. You have to understand that first, otherwise you won't have good communication. And if you are not able to have good communication with others, you want to solve a specific problem, there's no way for that”. (P1)*

*“it's quite significant because students can be in an uncertain situation and willing to overcome or find some ways to make them fit in the situation. In this feeling of anxiety, they will have more understanding of what others expect or face when they are in a completely different or strange environment.”. (P2)*

**c. Both professors have different perspectives about the future benefit of students working in cross-culture community service**

Both professors have different answers when they were asked to said the future benefit or uses for the students who participating in a cross-culture community service. P1 is more emphasis to have more interaction with different culture people, students could get to know their characters or build theirs views by recognizing the diversity of people. In the other side, P2 was concern on the inner characters or self-identity the students had within themselves, these program or activities could only raise satisfaction for students who were ready to explore different options.

*“because working with people from different cultures will help the people involved to learn from different perspectives and which I think is very important for any students or learners in colleges. When students face any challenges or difficulties or any issues that are concerned by a lot of other people, they have to form their perspective first.” (P1)*

*“In our dept., we have different characters of students, they pursue different things, so we don’t actually know is there any benefit for their future career. For example, I studied in France but I don’t think French is that much useful to my career. But, when I face some international students I will be able to get close to their feelings. In my conclusion, as an educator, we are opening our platform for students to have more choices, they can choose anything that is beneficial for them or their future”. (P2)*

## 5. Conclusion & Discussion

This study aimed to re-images the social interaction and integration, cross-cultural transition and friendship development of International and domestic students after working together in a shared role. The results have provided insights include a number of salient themes emerged from qualitative data analysis (Interviews) and tubular charts analysis from likert-scale questionnaires.

### **5-1. Language is the most obvious communication barrier but couldn't beat human natural curiosity to understand others' culture**

There is a challenge of communication between International and domestic students. Throughout the program F1 and D4 were obsessed with language, but they had resolved certain situations together and expressed their pleasant moments. Ex: They used mobile phones to translate their conversation via google. After the program they become more supportive, communicate and connect actively. Referring from the study objectives, the results in the first phase of interview have significantly portrayed that regards of language to be an obstacle only to convey one's thought or emotion, but it was not confirmation that mankind's natural connection was shattered. This interaction has led to a transition between two cultures, but in both interviews, when we challenged their cultural disparity, they both started representing culture differently. In other terms, they started to detach themselves from their comfort zone, compare culture, disregard unified ideologies and glance at the experiences of other individuals.

### **5-2. Community participation leads a solution for the globalization of higher education**

Researchers have recommended that universities should take account of social environments for international students. Because integration is strengthened by friends both from home and from host countries (Bochner, McLeod and Lin, 1977; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985; Merola, 2019). As for international students it will make them feel more confident, content and integrated within their host environment. In this tradition, researchers have stated that foreign tertiary students seek 'a sense of belonging by integration with the local community,' not in contrast to current 'social,



cultural and religious identities' (Gomes and Tran, 2016, p. 286; Rowan et al., 2021). For Taiwan universities, designing and coordinating their learning environment to recruit foreign students is very significant to attract international students. Managing international students studying on their campus is a highly experienced in most campuses in Taiwan (Wibowo and Wu , 2020). A recent study by Ching(2020) suggested that universities in Taiwan should start looking back and revisit their institution's core competitiveness, discover the uniqueness and develop it within courses. Connect a modern institutional brand that relies on its special strategic advantages (Ching, 2020).

### **5-3. University professors consider cross-culture community service is benefit for students**

The second phase of the interview, results showed promising changes in professors' expectations. They highlighted the need for students to meet and work as a team that supports all entities. In both sides, they will have the ability to share real thoughts on their countries and to extend ideas that will support their carriers and also look at prospects for economic or business development that will yield beneficial outcomes for both countries.

### **5-4. Culture reveal through understanding and interaction of both sides**

In the second part of the interview, it also revealed that Taiwanese culture is passive and not dismissive, respectful to anyone, and that it makes natives not speak to people as easily for people in America, Europe or Africa have in common. Many foreign students have grown up to express their opinions about Taiwanese students who are hesitant about communicating to them. Our interview has clarified that

Taiwanese students learn English language at early stage and do not get that atmosphere to utilize the language, in which they master the Chinese language that simplify their communication. Convening foreign students and local residents will help to overcome this language issue, so they will share the experience and inevitably be drawn to foreign languages from both sides.

## 6. Recommendations

This paper has provided several insights to document the process of establishing an intercultural program for domestic and international students associated with activities that involves the community; Based on the third question that was asked via a google form to the participants; “*What will you suggest and recommend to the organizers for their next issue?*”. The participants (students) recommended the following.

- The founders of the program should guide students recruited in the summer program first to learn from the children and community culture, and the emphasis should be on the personalities of children. This will help them to assess and complete the effect of the program better..
- More involvement in preparations and engagement, resonating with the team about changes and its reasons behind, have more outdoor activities, inclusion of more interactive activities rather than repeated schedules, involve the local people to narrate or display history and culture.
- To explore the adjustment needs and experiences of university students in a summer program that involves the local community such as engaging games that would link the students and the participants.

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