"Let's Teach English in Cambodia":

Intercultural Competence Development and Job Performance

Following International Volunteer Service

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Abstract

Within the last decade, international volunteer service has become a very popular and important educational activity throughout all levels of education in Taiwan. Based on an overview of international volunteer service studies from three major research databases in Taiwan, this study found that very few studies have focused on the influence of these important international learning experiences on job performance. Hence, this study aims to explore the intercultural phenomena of four international volunteers' experiences. After the participants' 1 to 2 years of work experience, how have they applied what they have learned from their international volunteer service experience to their job performance? In particular, how have they developed and performed in terms of intercultural competence? The study first provides authentic first-hand accounts of how these participants have reconciled all the ups and downs of intercultural competence development to their job performance. Furthermore, the study notes what their real intercultural communication motives were and how this intercultural competence empowered them in choices of action. It is hoped that the study findings will provide solid data and suggestions for future international volunteer educational programs as well as for educators, researchers, and scholars with a specific interest in intercultural competence development and application.

Keywords: international volunteer service, intercultural competence, job performance

從跨文化知能發展到職場應用之探究**：**

以「柬埔寨英語 **E** 起來」國際志工為例

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摘要

　　台灣近十年來，國際志工成為很受歡迎的重要教育活動。總觀台灣三大研究資料庫有關國際志工的研究，鮮少探究國際志工跨文化知能發展在職場之應用。本文透過問卷深度訪談四位國立臺中科技大學應用英語系畢業生，在擔任柬埔寨國際志工其間之跨文化知能發展歷程；並進一步探究，經過一到兩年職場實務經驗，受訪者如何將此國際志工經驗所發展的跨文化知能應用在職場上。本文除了提供跨文化知能發展和應用歷程之第一線資料；進一步發現，這些國際志工本身跨文化溝通動機，和跨文化知能所賦予的選擇力很重要，值得未來研究。本文預期提供有關國際志工教育活動規劃、跨文化知能發展、和職場應用的重要參考文獻。

關鍵詞：國際志工、跨文化知能、職場應用

I. Introduction

Higher education is internationalized. It is the essence of higher education itself and has become a global trend (C. L. Yang, 2004; R. Yang, 2002). In Taiwan, one of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) visions for 2013 to 2016 is to develop international competitiveness. Resources and opportunities are available for teachers and students at any level. For example, in terms of teacher lifelong learning and diverse training programs, teachers are selected to be sent overseas to enhance their English teaching abilities. Additional foreign language teaching and learning programs are provided via government offices and universities. For students, there are many government-sponsored projects, such as scholarships for overseas study, including a scholarship for the disadvantaged, an overseas internship scholarship, and ones for international and domestic volunteers. At the university and college level, since 2003, the MOE has sponsored the development of students' foreign language levels (mainly English) and actively encouraged setting up graduation requirements in foreign languages.

Along with many educators' recommendations for more international exchange in higher education (Huang, 2012) and the MOE's long-term goals as well as short-term projects, the government and NGOs have continuously poured resources into developing international competitiveness both in terms of finances and manpower. Obviously, just learning English or other foreign languages is in itself not enough to develop international competitiveness. Immersing oneself into diverse cultures and environments in order to experience multiple aspects of public and private life for a certain period of time provides more significant opportunities to advance this goal. Hence, actively reaching out to the world by physically participating in overseas activities is strongly encouraged. As we live in such a globalized world (Albrow, 1996), institutions of higher education aim to produce global-ready graduates. Providing opportunities for students to be international volunteers seems to be a good way to, on the one hand, produce first-hand experience and learn from those foreign experiences, and on the other hand, through voluntary service, to substantially fulfill the responsibility to play an active role in the world.

After students graduate, they soon apply what they have learned from these international volunteer learning experiences to their careers and personal lives. The learning outcomes and their applicability to the real world is a vital concern of higher education (Vende Berg, 2001). American president Barack Obama has recently expressed concern (Chegg, 2013) about schools' eligibility for federal funding needing to be tied to students' post-collegiate successes and struggles in the workplace. The same domestic concern of bridging the gap between learning on campus and performing in the work place was voiced by Taiwan's contemporary

youth at the 2013 Youth Issues Seminar. Therefore, this study's purpose echoes the international as well as domestic need to explore how the learning outcomes of international volunteer service experiences have substantially affected job performance. Particularly, this study focuses on how these participants have developed intercultural competence throughout the international volunteering journey, and its applicability in the workplace.

II. Review of the Literature

It is said that international volunteers are in a very special position to develop intercultural competence as they personally experience new cultures first-hand and work closely with host countries (Lough, 2011). These cultural experiences and abilities are currently viewed as critically important in global society and in the job market (Barker, 2000; Matveev & Milter, 2004). This study explores the role of international volunteering in developing intercultural competence, and how this plays a critical part in job performance and applicability to the real world. The following literature review will describe first the research on the subject of international volunteer studies in Taiwan, and second the main relevant conceptual framework, the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006), along with Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (1984).

1. International Volunteer Service Studies in Taiwan

There are important international studies that have assessed intercultural competence within service learning (see Camacho, 2004; Kiely, 2004; Merrill & Pusch, 2007; Parker & Dautoff, 2007; Urraca, Ledoux, & Harris, 2009). This article intends to explore the body of domestic research on international volunteer service studies in Taiwan from three major research databases: the National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), the Airiti Library, and the Taiwan Periodical Literature System. It aims to provide an overall research subject overview of international volunteer studies in Taiwan.

In the NDLTD database in 2013, 22 studies on international volunteering were located, all of which were conducted within the past 10 years. Since international volunteering has become an educational trend by playing a key role in being a responsible global citizen, interest in international volunteer studies appears in various fields. Most studies appear in the discipline of education. The research covers themes from adult to special education, curriculum design to language education, and social to occupational education. Additionally, research from the social sciences on social policy and social welfare was also included.

Overall, education and social sciences are the two major academic fields actively conducting most research on international volunteering. Other disciplines include international management, information sciences, environment, leisure and sports, sightseeing and culture, even military education. The most frequent focus of research done on international volunteer service is in self-development (e.g. Chen, 2005[1]). The rest are in project design (e.g. Wu, 2013), reflective practice (e.g. Yeh, 2011), group development (e.g. Ho, 2012), life education (e.g. Hsieh, 2012), civic education (e.g. Kuo, 2012), institutional partnership development (e.g. Kao, 2011), NGO international volunteering (e.g. Deng, 2012), volunteer tourism (e.g. Wu, 2012), and job performance (Chen, 2012).

A search of the other two databases, the Airiti Library and the Taiwan Periodical Literature System found 15 articles on international volunteer services. The main discussions are on personal development (e.g. Chang & Chen, 2012), group dynamics (Jia & Liu, 2013), the vision and meaning of international volunteer service (e.g. Tsai, 2008), volunteer tourism (Shiu, Li, & Chen, 2009), NGOs' role in international volunteer service (e.g. Chiang & Chang, 2011), civic education (Li & Chen, 2011), and one with a special emphasis on animal protection (e.g. Huang, 2004).

In the studies mentioned above, the theme of intercultural competence development in international volunteering has never been the focus. A few studies (e.g. Chen, 2008) have briefly mentioned the importance of respecting different cultures, being aware of stereotypes, becoming open-minded, and the like. However, none of them has conducted a full-scale exploration of intercultural competence. Additionally, even though one study mentioned the influence of international volunteer experience on job performance (Chen, 2012), the job performance evaluation was related only to international volunteering, rather than to real job market performance.

Hence, the overall layout of the literature shows three major trends in international volunteer studies in Taiwan. First, international volunteering is an international trend, as well as a contemporary concern shared by a large body of research conducted in various fields over the past 10 years in Taiwan. Yet, the quantity and quality of this type of study remains limited—less than 40 studies in Taiwanese academia, which indicates more attention is needed in order to explore new perspectives in international volunteering. Second, among all of the previous studies, none contains a full-scale discussion of the development of intercultural competence, an ability which is currently viewed as highly significant in global

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[1]All the following exemplary papers were selected based on the high frequency of citation, the latest, and their representativeness.

society and in the job market (Barker, 2000; Matveev & Milter, 2004). More research on intercultural competence development needs to be carried out in order to fulfill theoretical as well as practical needs in Taiwan academia and industry. Third, in this turbulent economic era, the gap between learning outcome and applicability to the real world concerns all educators as well as youth. So far, little research on international volunteering in Taiwan has placed the major focus on this aspect, which reflects the value of this study that primarily analyzes intercultural competence development and its application to the job market.

2. Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

In the field of intercultural education, the definition of intercultural competence has been discussed for a long period of time, yet is still not well-defined (Deardorff, 2008). This study uses the definition from a well-known empirical study (Deardorff, 2006), which examined 23 renowned intercultural scholars' views and presented the top-rated view as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p.33). The current study employs Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence [2] (2006) (see Figure 1) as a conceptual framework for survey design and analytical approach due to its extended focus on the external outcome of intercultural competence. It conforms to the purpose of this study to explore how international volunteers assess their external outcome by reflecting and conceptualizing their intercultural competence performance regarding job applicability.

Briefly speaking, Deardorff's model defines external outcome "as effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (p. 256). In this study, this concept is examined from the individual level of attitude, knowledge, and skill to an interactional level of internal and external outcome by having participants self-assess their behavior and communication performance in the job market. The definitions of the terms "attitude," "knowledge," and "skill," are carefully selected from Deardorff's major and relevant articles, and the survey design of the study (see Appendix B) strictly follows the blueprint of the concept description. In terms of attitude, it implies that:

> openness and curiosity [is] a willingness to risk and to move beyond one's comfort zone. In communicating respect to others, it is important to demonstrate that others are valued. These attitudes are foundational to the further development of knowledge and skills needed for intercultural competence (Deardorff, n.d., p. 1).

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[2]The researcher deeply appreciated Dr. Deardorff's permission of using this conceptual framework in the study.

In terms of knowledge, it includes:

> cultural self-awareness (meaning the ways in which one's culture has influenced one's identity and worldview), culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge including other world views, and sociolinguistic awareness. The one element agreed upon by all the intercultural scholars was the importance of understanding the world from other's perspectives (Deardorff, n.d., p. 1).

Speaking of skills, it points out that *critical thinking* is the ability to acquire and evaluate knowledge and experience, and skills such as listening, observation, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating (Deardorff, 2011). When it comes to the performance level, it is categorized as desired internal and external outcomes. Internal outcome consists of flexibility, adaptability, ethno-relative perspective, and empathy. When the discussion leads to the final phase of intercultural competence–*external outcome*, it is clearly defined as "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 256) based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:

Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:

Informed frame of reference/filter shift:

Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);

Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);

Ethno-relative view;

Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:

Cultural self-awareness;

Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);

Skills:

To listen, observe and interpret;

To analyze, evaluate and relate

Requisite Attitudes:

Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)

Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)

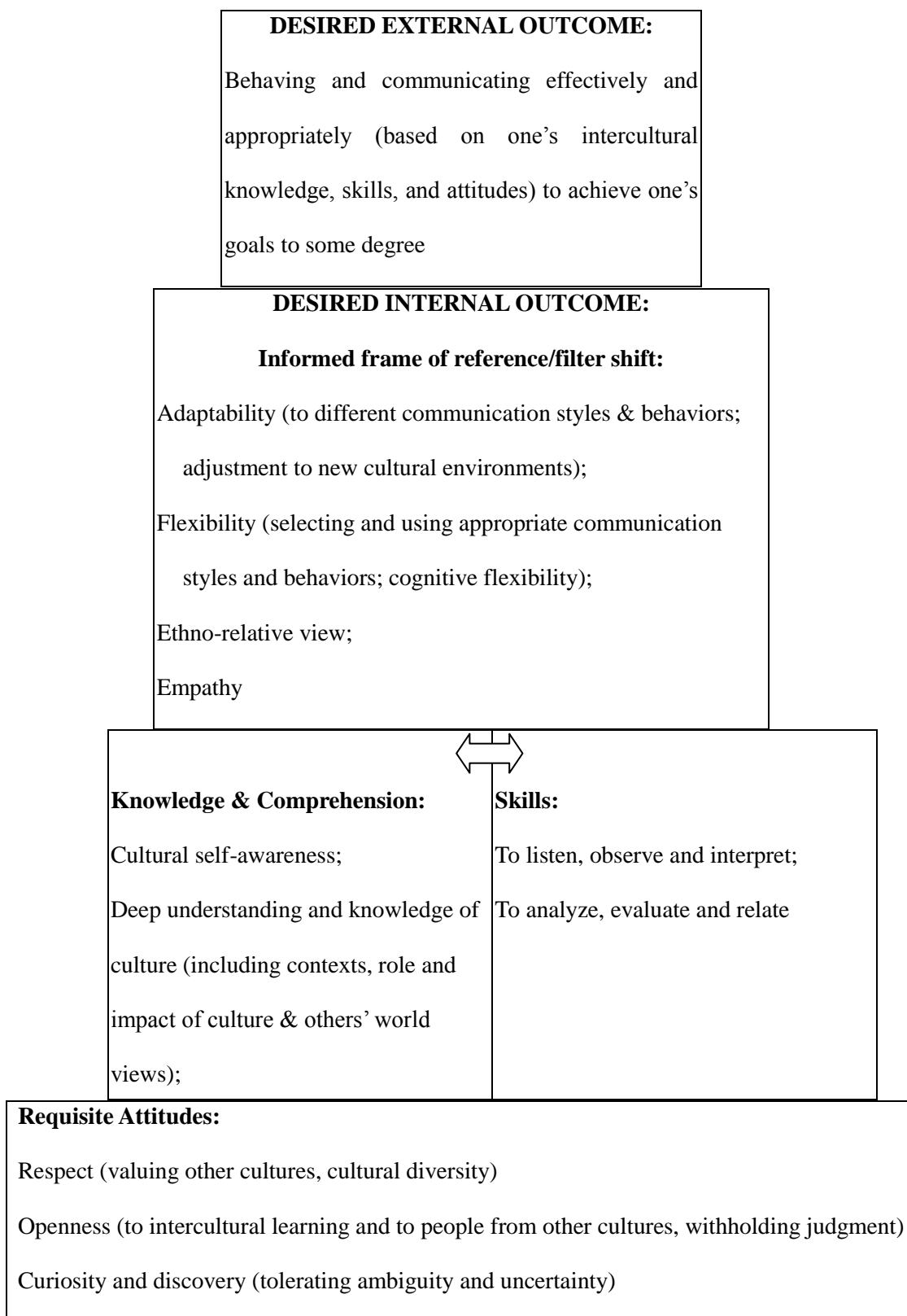Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

Figure 1. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009).

Intercultural competence is an ongoing developmental process. Therefore, it needs to be assessed "throughout time—not just one or two points in time" (Deardorff, 2006, p.259). Most domestic research in Taiwan has studied international volunteers immediately after the camp experience. Those studies resulted in assessing that particular time in the subjects' life. The difference in this study lies not only in inviting the participants to deeply reflect on the intercultural experience after few years, but more importantly assessing their current intercultural competence performance in the job market. The study's results truly support the idea of "the acquisition of intercultural competence as a continual, dynamic process" (Stiftung, 2006, p.6).

Besides Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence, the conceptual framework is further expanded by the well-known Experiential Learning Model (1984, see Figure 2) which was influenced by John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, and developed by David A. Kolb in the early 1970s. It presents four key learning elements: concrete experience, observation of and reflection on that experience, the formation of abstract concepts based on the reflection, and the testing of the new concepts. As for this Cambodian English camp, after having the international volunteer experience—a *concrete* experience—and throughout the *observation* of and *reflection* on that particular international experience (through regular meeting discussions, and oral and written reflections on site and after), the volunteers must have *formed* some abstract, new, or alternative concepts which prepared them to *test* those new perspectives in their professional performance as well as in their personal lives. Most domestic studies have researched the first three phases of learning in the international volunteer experience. This study has extended the analysis to focus on the fourth part of the learning cycle: after 1–2 years of *testing* those concepts learned from their international volunteer experience in their work performance, how the results of that testing—in other words, behaviors or learning outcomes—have affected their workplace in terms of intercultural competence. By examining how this testing of new concepts proceeds, the study leads the participants to reflect on and re-examine any new insights on the development and applicability of intercultural competence. In other words, it follows them as the learning cycle is going into another run. It again genuinely confirms that learning is always an ongoing process, gaining new knowledge and concepts by transforming lived experiences (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005) and also that "the acquisition of intercultural competence [is] a continual, dynamic process" (Stiftung, 2006, p.6).
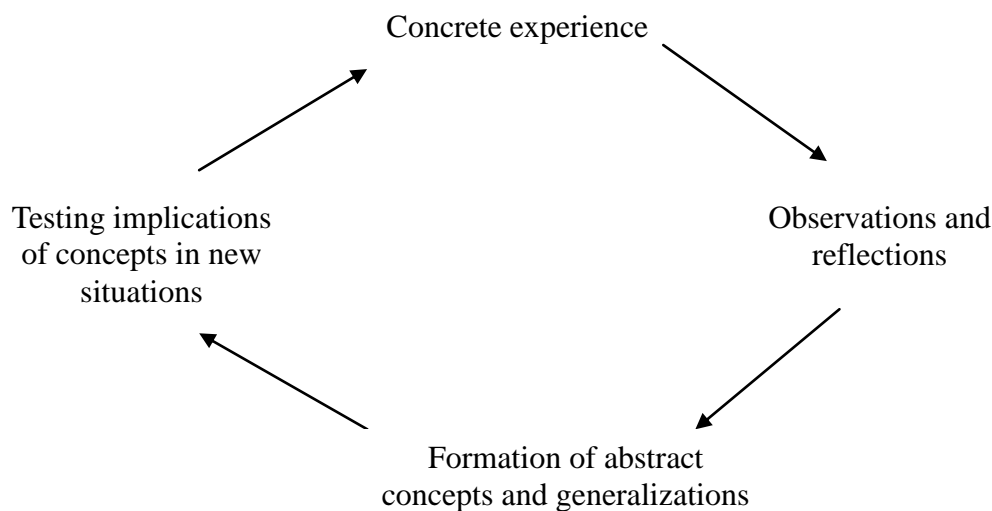
Concrete experience

Testing implications
of concepts in new
situations

Observations and
reflections

Formation of abstract
concepts and generalizations

Figure 2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (1984)

III. Methodology

The study data was mainly collected through two sets of the researcher's self-designed surveys based on the conceptual framework of Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (see Appendix A and B) along with a series of in-depth interviews. The data was from a Cambodian English camp in January 2011, which was an international volunteer service activity. By closely collaborating with an NGO unit—the Care Without Border Association (CWBA)—this activity was officially funded by the Ministry of Education, the Executive Yuan Youth Vocational Training Center, and the participating university, and was executed by the researcher along with one school nurse and nine students. The main objective was to teach English to Cambodian elementary students from levels 1 to 6 (in total, about 60 students) at the Prey Piseth School in Cambodia. The entire English teaching service session lasted about two weeks. Since this international volunteer activity itself possessed abundant documents, including project proposals, training documents, curriculum and teaching materials, meeting minutes, journals, field notes, photos, videos, and so forth, the research analysis was accompanied by rich evidence for more detailed examination.

This study intends to examine English-major college graduates' intercultural competence development during international volunteer service and afterwards, job performance. For students who are English majors, it is a familiar concept that learning English is not simply a matter of four skills anymore. It certainly involves any type of intercultural encounter in terms

94

of materials learning and/or interlocutor conversations. In the global village, the goal of using English is no longer just for communicating with native English speakers, and even the definition of native speaker is quite controversial and doubtful (Widdowson, 1994). In this study, non-native English speaking international volunteers from Taiwan teach English to non-native English speaking Cambodian students. The theoretical concept and practical use of English teaching approaches and materials design is significantly based on the concept of World English, rather than Standard English (Widdowson, 1997) which critically reflects the awareness of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). For instance, in addition to English material, both Taiwanese (the volunteers') and Cambodian (the students') cultures and languages were valued and exchanged during the process of teaching and learning (Beane, 1997). Besides teaching famous holidays from the West such as Halloween, and songs such as The Hokey Pokey and Ten Little Indians, a Taiwan-Cambodia jigsaw map game, and Cambodian numbers (e.g sūn for one, mūy for two, bì for three, etc.) are also included in the curriculum design (Yan, 2011).

Four out of nine volunteers were chosen due to their camp position and the variety of member experiences (see Table 1). Since now they were all working either in Taiwan or in a foreign country, email and Facebook are often used for communication as well as data collecting channels. Prior to the interview, all the participants received a research consent form and agreed to all the research terms. Then, an overall international volunteer service self-evaluation survey was sent out (see Appendix A). This survey was designed based on the MOE (2014) Service Learning Self-Evaluation. The first survey was to actively assist the participants in reflecting their overall intercultural experience two years ago and its general application to job performance. After one month, another survey (see Appendix B) designed on the basis of Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence was used to collect key information on intercultural competence development and applicability in the workplace.

Table 1 Participants' Personal Information

Pseudonym	Camp Position	Gender	Current job in November 2013	Foreign countries and regions encountered at the workplace	Amount of times participating in previous camps
QR'S	Leader	F	Assistant to President and Business Sales	Europe, USA, South east Asia, Singapore, South Africa, Nepal, China	8
AC	Co-leader	F	Domestic and International Tour Sales	Not directly interacting with foreigners but sell tours to foreign countries: Japan, Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, and	10

				Macao	
W	Novice Member	F	Business Assistant and Sales	Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Middle East, Southeast Asia	0
Matt	Experienced Member	M	Bulk Packer	On working holiday in Australia and mostly interacting with foreigners from Philippines, Myanmar, and New Zealand	4

The survey items were rated on a four-level scale: Excellent, Average, Below Average, and Poor. The follow-up in-depth interviews were conducted based on unusual rating conditions. For instance, if most items were rated Excellent, and few Below Average or even Poor, the researcher would penetrate deeper in the interviews for more elaboration in details on those items. Each interview lasted about one to two hours, either through email, Facebook, by phone, or in person. The research survey and interviews were all conducted in Chinese and later translated to English by the researcher.

Concerning the validity of self-evaluation on volunteering service, normally *voluntary* activities involves fairly high learning motivation. One domestic study (Xie, 2011) in particular examined the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy of international volunteers which showed those volunteers had high motivation in learning. The predominant goal of volunteering was to gain intercultural experience, professional skills, self-fulfillment, and personal growth. On the same ground, Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (1984) discussed earlier points out that the first stage of having a concrete experience is that the subject must immerse themselves completely, openly, and without any bias toward new experiences. Therefore, this study's participants, with their high motivation and an open mind for learning and developing personal intercultural competence development, can reveal reliable information to a great degree because they do care how much they have learned from their international volunteer service experiences and furthermore, how well they apply it to the real world professionally and personally. Additionally, a highly quoted international academic article from *Human Resource Development Quarterly* (Bhanthumnavin, 2003) reveals that job performance assessment can be collected through four aspects: self-evaluation, managers or colleagues, company-relevant objective documents, and external documents. In this study, self-evaluation is the main method of collecting data from their reflection of the camp activity two years ago and as well as their subsequent job performance. Since the researcher participated in the camp activity from the beginning to the end, she was capable of playing the major role as the manager to cross-examine the relevant data including activity documents and the participants' self-evaluations.

IV. Analysis and Discussion

This section displays the research findings with regards to the applicability of international volunteer experience to job performance, and how the participants re-conceptualized intercultural competence development and its current application to the job market. In terms of attitude, the research found that in order to make the most of their international volunteering experience, subjects should: always prepare, and yet do it more *accurately*, and always be *goal-oriented*. In terms of skill, other than being able to listen, observe, relate, interpret, analyze, and evaluate, the study further noticed the importance of *selecting* how to perform intercultural competence. In terms of knowledge, the data shows the participants were eager to reach out to the real world by acting out their knowledge and yet at the same time left some space for flexible interpretation of culturally hidden messages. The detailed analysis and discussion are thoroughly elaborated in the following section.

1. The Attitude of Always Being Prepared, and Yet, Do It More *Accurately*

Due to the essential difficulty of this type of international mission, *always being fully prepared* became the most complex task at that time, and also turns into the most useful skill later in the job market. Since this Cambodian English camp was the very first international volunteer activity at the participants' university, they had to reach out for every piece of information or possibly usable resource on and off campus by themselves.

As the mission leader, QR'S had to learn to prepare almost everything from the scratch. This task is quite similar to what she has had to carry out at her current workplace. As an aid to the company president, as well as in assisting in international sales to many foreign countries (see Table 1 for more details), QR'S always needs to collect information about different projects regarding areas beyond the scope of regular foreign business operation, such as language background, custom, and even hidden cultural messages. While carrying the duty as the camp leader in 2011, QR'S felt enormously stressed with the lack of resources provided ahead of time, which she considered a big drawback during and immediately after the camp. Nevertheless, this learning experience in dealing with limited resources came to be her greatest asset later in her job performance because she learned that she always needs to prepare herself to the best of her ability in order to handle a variety of possible situations in a foreign country. For her, the most useful and applicable experience from the international volunteer service to job performance was learning to visualize all the possible difficulties and equip herself with as thorough preparation as possible. Even though the main purpose of the

Cambodian English camp was to teach Cambodian students English, for her, immersing herself entirely into preparing, planning, and executing the entire project helped her a great deal in the long run in her professional career and personal life.

AC as a co-leader replied that preparation had never seemed adequate during the Cambodian camp activity. She approached the concept of preparation from another perspective. She considered that if there are always too many emergent situations that differ from expectations, it meant the preparation was going in the wrong direction and the mission was still not well prepared for. Therefore, preparation needed but in a more *accurate* direction to avoid time wasted on previous preparation, and later on re-preparation. By *accurately* preparing, limited resources such as time, manpower, and funding could be utilized in a more efficient way. QR'S also mentioned the same idea from another perspective. She stated, "I personally think being flexible is related to being not well-prepared." Overall, as the mission leader and co-leader, QR'S and AC both expressed that simply preparing is not enough, but preparation in the right direction could avoid more unnecessary changes afterwards and make better use of limited resources.

As for W, she had always prepared many different versions of teaching materials while in the Cambodian English camp. Almost every day after teaching, the team had to change the materials to a degree based on the students' actual needs. Hence, she had learned the need for preparing multiple plans for immediate and necessary changes. In similar situations in the workplace, while meeting managers, customers, or colleagues, she would always prepare different proposals just in case there would be a need for a change.

Matt now is on a working holiday in Australia as a bulk packer. Even though volunteering in Cambodia is quite different from working in Australia as a temporary employee, he expressed that the same preparation attitude has become his habit before going to a foreign country. By studying the country and learning more about its culture, language, and society, he is well-equipped to be aware of difficulties and challenges that may lie ahead. He said:

> Now, I have had the habit of doing lots of preparation before I go to a foreign country. It is very fundamental and necessary, such as knowing cultural differences, people, society, and weather. Prepare, prepare, and prepare!

Overall, the attitude of always being prepared is what these participants typically learned the most from their international volunteer service and they have gone on to apply this knowledge in their current workplace. Especially in handing matters in a foreign domain, full preparation can comfortably ease their anxiety while facing a variety of unfamiliar interactions. Furthermore, *effective* preparation, which indicates preparation in an *accurate*

direction, makes better use of limited time and resources.

2. The Tendency to Be More *Goal*-Oriented

Ambiguity tolerance is one of the main indicators of intercultural competence. However, as QR'S self-evaluated that tolerating ambiguity is not her strength, this reply immediately attracted the researcher's attention to explore in more detail. In the follow-up interview, QR'S firmly stated it all depends on what the goal is. For example, while dealing with some foreign customers who are always used to expressing rough and even obscure ideas in a meeting, she would immediately follow up for a concrete result by requesting for or sending out clear meeting minutes via email for confirmation. Therefore, it's not simply a matter of being ambiguity-tolerant. She cared more about the achieving the goal of the project.

As for AC, while in a task, she focused on problem solving which was her goal, rather than finding out what the problem was in the first place. Due to limited time and resources during the camp, AC had developed a habitual thought that when a situation happens or a problem occurs, the idea of being *unable* to solve it should not even cross her mind. Instead, "How could I solve the problem right away and carry on the project?" was the only thought at that time. Therefore, now in the workplace, she stated that the thought "Could it be done?" is immediately transformed into the thought "I could give it a shot!" How she could solve the problem in the first place always became her first priority in order to accomplish the job goal.

The 2011 Cambodian English camp was W's first time to participate in voluntary service. Although she was quite a novice in the camp, she did not care about the work content or the title of the position due to her high motivation for learning. As long as the task needed to be done, the team always worked together one way or another. This attitude has carried over to her work place as well. She always tried to help her colleagues out as much as possible regardless of the job title or the content, as long as the goal was accomplished. However, she also noticed that the voluntary camp activity was in some way different from a real world situation. Even though she would have loved to give an extra hand to her colleagues, there was not always reciprocity in the real world. W realized other colleagues would not always stand by to cover her back, and she needed to be more attentive to job details by herself.

As for Matt's learning experience during the Cambodian camp, he realized that all the teammates were from different backgrounds and often expressed different opinions during the discussions. Confrontations were unavoidable and even acceptable and positive. As long as the team's mission goal stayed the same, confrontations could even generate creative ideas, and this type of discussion is always useful in the workplace. Therefore, he considered that as

in the camp, reaching a team goal through confrontation could be a very positive and useful skill in the workplace.

Overall, during the international volunteer service activity, while in the role of being a student, these participants one way or another always wanted to accomplish the mission. Hence, with strong goal-oriented motivation, whether the attitude was flexible or not, whether the mission was possible or impossible, caring about a certain job title or not, or dealing with confrontation or not, the ultimate goal was to immediately solve the problem, carry on the project, and accomplish the task.

3. Selective Intercultural Competence Performance

Knowledge alone is definitely not sufficient for developing intercultural competence. As Bok (2006) specified, developing skills for thinking interculturally and internationally becomes more significant than the actual knowledge with which one is equipped. From the previous analysis, one peculiar and yet important trait has been discovered from two participants, QR'S and W. Due to the work content of foreign business sales in which both assist, with regards to some intercultural competence indicators, they choose *not* to perform well. For instance, while grading herself on the intercultural competence scale, QR'S rated all 15 items as Excellent with the exception of three which she rated Average: staying curious, seeing things from others' world views, and having sociolinguistic awareness. This divergence again caught the researcher's attention and was followed up in subsequent interviews. QR'S elaborated that being curious is not always good, especially in a foreign workplace. Especially within a different cultural, linguistic, and social background, there might be some private or taboo topics that she would not want to broach. Additionally, with regard to seeing from others' world views and having sociolinguistic awareness, unless directly related to business matters, it is not necessary to do so. She offered an example: Some customers may have a loose or inaccurate timeline for meetings or for delivery dates due to their cultural concept of time. Unless one is constantly aware of this hidden cultural message and challenges it, it could lead to inefficiency and uncertainty. This perspective to a certain degree is similar to the goal-oriented tendency previously discussed. From QR'S's business viewpoint, if efficiently using intercultural competence sometimes would not lead to the desired result or even worse, she would rather choose *not* to apply these intercultural competences to the job performance. For the same reason, W rated all 15 evaluation items of intercultural competence as Excellent except for four as Average: curiosity, discovery, evaluating, and relating. After a thorough follow-up interview, she elaborated with a similar

remark: "Unless it's a have-to situation of work related matters, keeping a safe distance in between is critical."

This is a significant phenomenon found in the study. It is not enough simply to explore how the participants have developed intercultural competence and how its performance becomes visible and actionable. Rather, to a greater degree, it is important to explore how much this competence has *empowered* those participants with *choices*. That is to say that they can choose to use or not to use their intercultural competence in order to achieve the external outcome of displaying "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (Deardorff, 2006, p.256). This echoes again the core value of the acquisition of intercultural competence as "a continual, dynamic process" (Stiftung, 2006, p.6) which enters another cycle of the Experiential Learning Model by forming a new abstract concept and testing it in a continuing experience. In fact, Spitzberg (2000, 2007) points out that similar actions or skills may be considered as competent in one particular context (an environment, situation, relationship, culture, etc.) but not in another. Therefore, there is no ability that is universally considered competent.

4. From Knowledge to Action: Narrowing the Gap in Between

The participants re-conceptualized the Cambodian English camp experiences moving from knowledge to experience and to new concepts in action.

(4) A. QR'S: 'Action-ing' the Knowledge.

During the Cambodian English camp project, whatever QR'S had learned from the courses and at university (such as information searching, communication skills, English speaking and teaching, and so on) all came together simultaneously into a single package of action. It was like practicing and integrating the overall learning experiences from her school curriculum into real life application (Huang, 1991), and striving to balance a combination of knowledge, skills, and values (Fang, 2000). Throughout this experience, she stated that she finally knew what it was really like to deal with different opinions, search for information, apply it immediately to different situations, and see the results in action. Those *genuine* experiences are definitely irreplaceable. After having this overseas experience, and going on to handle foreign business in the workplace, QR'S felt less fearful and more confident because she had the *experience* in the real world and she had the *authentic* feeling of what the experience was like. She provided another example in the business workplace. She stated,

Knowing that Japanese are serious about their timeline from book knowledge is one

> thing. By actually interacting with Japanese, we would genuinely know how Japanese were not only serious about time, but almost everything. There is a huge difference between having knowledge and personally interacting with it.

Following the Dewey tradition of the value of learning by doing (Jackson, 1998), experiences are the true way to narrow the gap between knowledge and action.

(4) B. AC: Truly Relating Personally With the World.

Before going to Cambodia as the other teammates had done, AC had prepared a lot to be able to understand Cambodia better in terms of culture, language, and customs. However, by personally going there and serving in a small village, some discrepancies emerged between the general knowledge of Cambodia and actual local village conditions. For instance, by personally going to Cambodia, AC realized how serious and critical the shortage of resources was, even with minor things such as stationary, pens and paper. After participating in this Cambodian English camp, AC could *truly relate more personally with the world* because she saw firsthand that there *is* a need for us to play a part in the world, to do something to help others out. When the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami happened in Japan, followed by the Fukushima nuclear disaster, without the experience of serving in Cambodia, AC stated she might simply have felt that Japan was too far away and that we could just pray for them. But with her international volunteer service experience in Cambodia, she reflected that she could truly relate more personally to the sufferers in Japan, and possibly offer to help in some way.

(4) C. W: Becoming Aware of Hidden Cultural Messages.

W had learned many different versions of lesson plan preparation in the classroom and hoped to have prepared well in advance for the Cambodian classroom. One of the courses was about making a kite. Even though all the team members had learned how to make a kite and were well-prepared for this craft lesson, surprisingly (or perhaps *unsurprisingly*), the Cambodian students made the kite much faster with better quality. Through the translator, Mr. Lin, the team finally grasped the whole picture. Since the Cambodian students did not have many entertainment resources such as toys and amusement parks, they were particularly good at creating hand-made toys such as kites. Therefore, this kite-building class taught W a lesson: she realized that there is a need to consider hidden socio-economic cultural messages while designing English lessons.

A similar thing happened in the watercolor lesson. There was a small watercolor stain on one student's uniform after the lesson. He looked extremely anxious and worried. After the translator's explanation, W understood that due to the average low socio-economic status of

the village, this was the child's only uniform. He would wear it for many days before washing it. There was not always enough clean water for basic household use, let alone for washing clothes. A simple kite lesson and a small watercolor stain on a uniform revealed how many more details an English teacher should notice about the hidden cultural aspects of curriculum design, including societal experience and community culture (Beane, 1997). By having this genuine experience, W now pays more attention to subtle and yet critical cultural messages not only in the teaching material design but more importantly, in her workplace with foreign colleagues and customers.

(4) D. Matt: Actively Reaching Out to the World with Careful Interpretation.

Although Matt's current situation is different from that of other participants, as a working holiday employee in Australia, he has found ways to reach out to the world by actively respecting cultural differences and drawing on his own cultural assets to communicate with his Australian boss and foreign colleagues. While facing all the differences in terms of culture, language, and opinions, Matt's intercultural skills have allowed him to always maintain balanced views and constantly observe his surroundings. And yet, when it comes to interpreting the meaning lying behind intercultural interaction, he cautiously expressed that he was less willing to interpret it because there might be some unknown and unfamiliar messages which would lead to a certain degree of misunderstanding. Overall, for his own part, culturally he was more than willing to elaborate for his foreign interlocutors about things such as why the main dish in Taiwan is rice, and why Taiwanese use chopsticks instead of forks, in order to provide better mutual understanding of cultural differences.

V. Implications

From the previous discussion, it is obvious how these participants have developed intercultural competence and how they have performed in their work place. On top of that, the study has further expanded the exploration, leading to two important implications from the data: motivation and power of choices.

Wiseman (in Deardorff, 2004) has stated that successful intercultural communication does not simply rely on intercultural competence which includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes, but more delicately, it relies on motivation, "the set of feelings, intention, needs and drives with the anticipation of or actual engagement in intercultural communication" (p.36). Any unmotivated interlocutor who conducts an intercultural communication will likely fail (Martin & Nakayama, 2004; Korhonen, 2002). For these participants, the attitude of

voluntarily participating in the international volunteer service gave them a leading edge in highly motivated engagement for any type of conversation in order to accomplish the mission. By the same token, they continually applied it to their job performance and always strove to take on responsible roles in seeking successful interactions. Therefore, other than intercultural competence itself and its applicability, the importance of maintaining motivation for more effective and appropriate behavior in intercultural communication is also revealed to be an important concern for developing intercultural competence.

Furthermore, the study has discovered one unique aspect of intercultural competence workplace application: the power of choice. Even though the final phase of intercultural competence—the desired external outcome—is to behave effectively and appropriately in intercultural communication, the study noted that two participants have revealed the importance of having the ability to *choose to or not to* enact their cultural competence skills during intercultural communication. They self-rated some intercultural competence items as Average instead of Excellent because they *chose not* to use them in order to avoid some possible awkward and undesired situations. The power of choice has outperformed all the other intercultural competence items in this study, and it is worth more exploration for future study.

VI. Conclusion

The international volunteer service experience certainly has many influential impacts on students during the camp activity, and after graduation in the workplace. The very first and direct impact of this international volunteer service learning experience on job applicability in the real world is making positive impressions on resumes. Even though building up a striking resume record was not their initial motivation, AC and W both expressed that one of the great advantages of this special experience was that it did make a great personal impression on their bosses, who offered them follow-up interviews and jobs afterwards. This also confirms the previous statement in the introduction that participating in the international volunteer service not only assists students in playing a responsible role as global citizens, but also truly helps in developing strong international competitiveness, and international businesses, corporations, and industries all value this kind of experience and action.

In addition to taking into account all the different aspects of personal growth from relevant studies in Taiwan (see literature review), this study has further discovered significant nuances of intercultural competence development and its application to the work place: from the attitude of *always being prepared* to *being prepared accurately*, from *effective*

intercultural behavior to *goal-oriented and competent* intercultural behavior, from *full-scale* interculturally competent performance to *selective* intercultural behavior, as well as the importance of moving from *knowledge* to *action* by first-hand experiencing and always being flexible for more cultural interpretation. On top of that, it has been found that maintaining highly-performed intercultural competence in the world not only relies on those indicating items in the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence , but more importantly on how much intercultural interlocutors are willing (*motivated*) to engage in the intercultural communication, and how to enable and empower them to have *choices* about how to perform interculturally competently in order to attain their goals in intercultural communication.

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Appendix A
International Volunteer's Service Learning on Job Performance Self-Evaluation
國際志工服務學習經驗之職場應用自我評核表

請就下列每項題目進行自我評估(適當空格中打 X) Please mark the appropriate box with an X.	表現優異 Excellent	表現普通 Average	有待加強 Below Average	表現很差 Poor
人格態度 Attitudes 依規定時間出席（或準時出席） On time				
無法準時出席時能事先告知， 並負責地補救造成的影響 Notification in advance of any unscheduled absence or tardiness, and responsibly provide makeup work				
展現熱忱耐心之工作態度 Passionate and patient				
展現積極樂觀之工作態度 Positive and optimistic				
虛心受教、勇於改進 Open-minded and flexible				
能力技巧 Skills 有計畫、組織的處理負責的事務 Well-organized				
能與主管溝通與合作 Cooperative with supervisors				
能與工作夥伴溝通與合作 Communicable and cooperative with work partners				
能與客戶適當溝通 Communicable with clients				
能在團體中與他人合作 Cooperative with teammates				
知識應用 Knowledge 能逐步了解公司相關功能 Understand company functions				
能對公司提出建設性之意見 Provide constructive suggestions				
能了解及尊重不同的文化 （公司或客戶等） Understand and respect different cultures (companies and clients)				
d.能應用志願服務相關知識和經驗於工作中 Apply voluntary service knowledge and experiences to job performance				

整體自評: 國際志工服務學習經驗對職場和個人的影響
Overall self-evaluation: The influence of international volunteer service learning experience on persona life and job performance.

Appendix B
International Volunteer's Intercultural Competence Self-Evaluation
國際志工跨文化知能自我評核表

請就目前狀況依下列每項題目進行自我評估 Please mark the appropriate box with an X.		表現優異 Excellent	表現普通 Average	有待加強 Below Average	表現很差 Poor
人格態度 Attitudes	更尊重不同文化 Respect different cultures				
	想法更加開放和彈性 Open to the world and being flexible				
	保持好奇心 Stay curiosity				
	勇於探索 Be willing to discover				
	比較容易接受模擬兩可的狀況 Tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty				
能力技巧 Skills	願意傾聽 to listen				
	較具觀察力 to observe				
	主動理解詮釋 to interpret				
	具有分析能力 to analyze				
	主動評估狀況 to evaluate				
	主動連結相關狀況 to relate				
知識 Knowledge	自我文化覺察力 Cultural self-awareness				
	同理心 Seeing from others' world views				
	注意文化特殊訊息 Culture-specific information				
	覺察不同的社會語言 Sociolinguistic awareness				
整體自評:就以下幾個部分分別說明 (適應力/adaptability, 彈性/flexibility, 種族相對觀/ethno-relative view, 同理心/empathy)					
自評外在跨文化知能行為表現: Q: 是否能有效且適當地溝通和表現出合宜的跨文化知能行為以達到某種程度的目的 Can you behave and communicate effectively and appropriately to achieve goals to some degree?					