

An Acculturation Dilemma for Asian International Students in Australia: The case of Vietnamese International Students

Le N. Tran

The University of New South Wales
UNSW, Sydney, NSW, 2052
Australia
Email: le.tran@student.unsw.edu.au

Abstract

Using the case of Vietnamese international students (VIS), this paper aims to explicate the factors that have led to an 'acculturation dilemma' often experienced by Asian international students in Australia. Data for the paper were collected by conducting one-on-one in-depth interviews with 51 VIS (recruited by using the maximum variation sampling technique). Analyses of data revealed that although most of the students preferred 'integration', their actual acculturation behaviors often reflected a 'separation' orientation.

A number of factors might account for these students' acculturation dilemma. Prominent is the dual confluence of their sense of cultural mistrust (healthy cultural paranoia), and the impact of their strong ethnic identity on their acculturation attitudes. Findings of this paper suggest a need to take into account internal factors when a mismatch between people's acculturation attitudes and behaviors is reported.

Keywords

Acculturation dilemma, cultural mistrust, identity, Asian, Vietnamese, sojourner

Introduction

Recent statistics from Australian Education International (2007) indicate that four out of every five international students in Australia (79.8%) come from Asia, and that Australia has now become a major exporter of international education. Despite the recent downturn in the global economy, Australia's international education sector has remained stable. This has been due to recent efforts of the Australian Government to reprioritize international education activities and mobilize resources to assure that Australia's education is highly regarded (Australian Education International, 2009). The goal of these governmental efforts is for Australia, in the words of Julia Gillard, the Minister for Education, 'to be seen by international students as a welcoming place to study for a globally recognized education qualification' (Gillard, 2009).

As a result of Australian government efforts, there is the hope that Asian international students (AIS) will have a meaningful experience in Australia, and that their increasing presence will help enrich not only Australia's economy, but also integrate additional socio-cultural values into its multicultural environment (Gillard, 2009). Findings from recent research, however, do not seem to support this expectation (e.g., De Vita & Case, 2003). It has been widely reported that given a lack of interactions between local and international students, there has been an evident separation between local-ness and international-ness (Anderson, 2008), and an array of problems such as social isolation and depression (Weiley, Sommers, & Bryce, 2008) face international students. Some researchers have viewed this situation as indicative of the inability of AIS to integrate into their host society (e.g., Berno & Ward, 2003). However, this view fails to acknowledge the role of Western universities, which have invested few resources intended to improve intercultural interactions on campus (Pang, 2008; Welch, 2002).

The limited intercultural contact between Asian and local students has motivated a number of studies designed to examine the situation (e.g., Brebner, 2008). These studies, however, have often focused on such issues as international education market share, daily life adjustment problems (e.g., accommodation), or learning issues (e.g., Ho, Li, Cooper, & Holmes, 2007; Rao, 2008). Although international students have been seen as potential skilled immigrants (Bochner, 2006), and considered a valuable resource for the Australian economy as well as an important cultural asset (Gillard, 2009), they have rarely been treated as legitimate subjects of acculturation research, at least relative to other acculturating cohorts (e.g., refugees). How they experience acculturation has thus remained largely unknown.

The lack of research involving the acculturation experience of AIS has provided the impetus for the study reported in this paper. The study was designed to explicate the factors that have led to the acculturation dilemma of AIS in Australia, via a look at the perspectives of VIS, one of Australia's various Asian student cohorts. The following sections include a review of the theoretical foundation, methodology, and main findings of the study.

Acculturation and Acculturation Dilemma

In this paper, an '*acculturation dilemma*' is viewed as a problem resulting from the divergence of the acculturation behaviors of AIS from their acculturation attitudes. This mismatch appears to be influenced by a number of internal and external constraints. The '*acculturation dilemma*' term has its theoretical foundation in acculturation theories (see Berry et al., 2002) which defined acculturation as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups...' (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, pp. 149-152). Acculturation strategies, comprised of both acculturation attitudes and behaviors, are derived from people's 'yes/no' response to two focal questions usually facing them in their new cultural setting. These include: (a) whether it is of value to maintain one's heritage culture (the cultural maintenance orientation), and (b) whether it is of value to seek interethnic contacts and participate in the larger society (the contact and participation orientation). When the viewpoints of the non-dominant groups are taken into consideration, for conceptualization purposes, four acculturation strategies are often identified, including integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. This formulation is presented in Figure 1 below, with (+) representing a 'yes', and (-) representing a 'no' to the two focal questions.

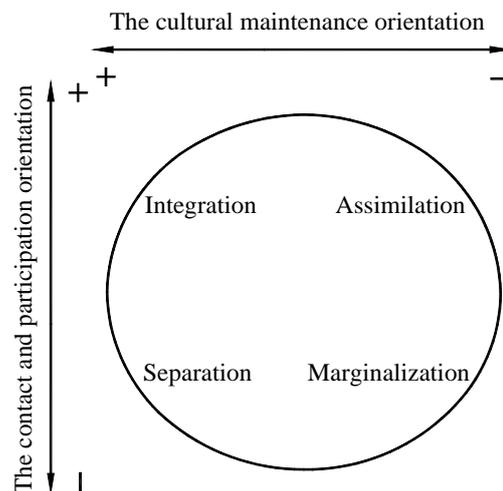


Figure 1. The formulation of acculturation strategies in a multicultural society.
Source: Berry et al., 2002

As can be seen from the figure,

- Integration is when individuals wish to maintain their original culture, and at the same time, seek to have interethnic contact and participate in the larger society.

- Assimilation is when individuals do not wish to preserve their cultural identity and seek daily interactions with individuals of other cultures.
- Separation is when people strive to hold on to their original culture, and avoid interactions with others.
- Marginalization is when individuals place little value both on cultural maintenance, and on becoming an integral part of the larger society.

As acknowledged by Berry et al. (2002), there is hardly a one-to-one match between what an individual prefers and seeks to exercise (acculturation attitudes), and what they actually do (acculturation behaviors). This discrepancy has usually been explained in the literature as resulting from social constraints (e.g., opportunities) on people’s behaviors. I suggest that such an explanation, although helpful, is insufficient, since it does not take into consideration the internal factors that might have hindered people from actualizing their preferences. As will be discussed later, there are potentially a number of internal factors at play. The presence of these internal factors adds to the ‘dilemma’ facing international students in Australia.

Methodology

Research Participants

Fifty-one VIS participated in this study. They were recruited using the maximum variation sampling technique (Patton, 1990). The strength of this recruitment technique is that it can help ensure an even distribution of the interviewees in terms of their demographic attributes (see Tables 1 and 2, and Figure 2). It thus helps mitigate the response biases normally found in studies with a homogeneous research population (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986).

Of a total sample of 51 participants, 43.1% (n=22) were male, and 56.9% (n=29) were female. They ranged in age from 20 to 42 (M= 28.67, SD=6.17). The sample included 43.1% (n=22) undergraduates and 56.9% (n=29) postgraduates; 47.1% (n=24) were single and 52.9% (n=27) were married. The students were selected from various regional and sandstone universities across Australia, with 31.4% (n=16) of the participants from NSW, 31.4% (n=16) from VIC, 23.5% (n=12) from QSL, and 13.7% (n=7) from ACT. The length of sojourn in Australia ranged from 0.5 years to 6.5 years (M=3.08, SD=1.71).

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of age and length of sojourn in Australia (N=51)

Attribute	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age (years)	51	20	42	28.67	6.17
Length Of Sojourn (years)	51	.50	6.50	3.08	1.71

Note: N = the number of interviewee participants. Age ranges from 20 (youngest) to 42 (oldest) years old. Length of sojourn in Australia ranges from 0.5 (shortest) to 6.5 (longest) years.

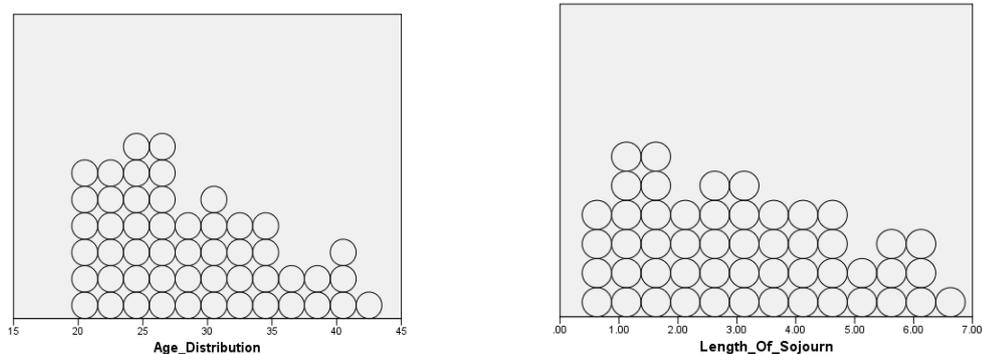


Figure 2. Dot plot distribution of age and length of sojourn in Australia by years

Table 2. Distribution of participants (N=51) by gender, marital status, location of university by state, and level of current study

Participant Characteristics	NSW n (%)	VIC n (%)	QSL n (%)	ACT n (%)	Total N (%)
Location of University by State	16 (31.4%)	16 (31.4%)	12 (23.5%)	7 (13.7%)	51 (100%)
Gender					
Male	7 (13.7%)	8 (15.7%)	5 (9.8%)	2 (3.9%)	22 (43.1%)
Female	9 (17.6%)	8 (15.7%)	7 (13.7%)	5 (9.8%)	29 (56.9%)
Marital Status					
Single	7 (13.7%)	7 (13.7%)	6 (11.8%)	4 (7.8%)	24 (47.1%)
Married	9 (17.6%)	9 (17.6%)	6 (11.8%)	3 (5.9%)	27 (52.9%)
Level of Current Study					
Undergraduate	8 (15.7%)	7 (13.7%)	5 (9.8%)	2 (3.9%)	22 (43.1%)
Postgraduate	8 (15.7%)	9 (17.6%)	7 (13.7%)	5 (9.8%)	29 (56.9%)

Note: Due to rounding, the percentages presented do not always make a total of 100%.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected by conducting 51 one-on-one and in-depth interviews over a period of 12 months. All of the interviews took approximately 1 hour each, and were conducted by the researcher in Vietnamese. The interviews were guided through the use of an interview guide, and transcribed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed both manually and via the support of NVIVO* (version 8.0). Both content analysis and grounded theory were utilized as methods of data analysis (Hall, 2008). The interviewees were interviewed on a systematic range of acculturation-related themes. Findings presented in the coming sections are only those in response to the acculturation-attitudes and acculturation-behaviors domains.

Findings and Discussion

The Acculturation Dilemma of VIS in Australia, or Is the Right Noise just Being Voiced?

Among 51 Vietnamese interviewees participating in the study, 49 of them preferred 'integration'. Only 2 interviewees chose 'assimilation', whereas none of them preferred either 'separation' or 'marginalization'. Of those who preferred 'integration', there were 134 interview segments provided to explain their preference for integration, and the importance of being biculturally competent. The advantages of integration they mentioned included improved English capability, enriched cross-cultural knowledge, the expansion of worldviews, and the presence of various opportunities for self-confirmation and self-development. These interviewees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be exposed to Australia's culturally plural society (Berry et al., 2002). They also considered it a 'shame' that some international students only sought to obtain an internationally recognized qualification.

Most of the interviewees expressed the view that it was essential to integrate into Australian society, regardless of the form this integration took. Desired levels of integration ranged from superficial to more involved - from interacting in person to interconnecting in cyberspace. The interviewees further noted that efforts were needed to actualize their preference. Such efforts could be sacrificing old but comfortable habits, having greater tolerance for differences, or being more accepting of others. However, other data suggested that such assertions were not paired with congruent acts.

Analyses of data on the interviewees' social affiliation preference and actual social affiliation suggested that among 49 interviewees preferring integration, only 22 of them preferred socializing with friends of mixed ethnicities, and only 11 of them actually managed to have a multiethnic social network. The interviewees acknowledged that though desiring to become an integral part of Australian society, they did not socialize much with the locals or with people of other ethnocultural groups, or attend local social events/activities. Even among those with a mixed social network, international and local friends were the least frequent acquaintances they interacted with. The interviewees confessed their unfamiliarity with Australian social values, worldviews, and political systems. They expressed a sense of social inadequacy despite their academic competence. For example, two interviewees admitted:

Although I have been here for nearly three years, and have nearly finished my Ph.D, I do not know much about Australia, its political system, its social values... (An interviewee from QSL)

I still feel awkward and nervous when I have to communicate with the locals. I feel terribly downgraded, maybe less confident even than an Aussie kid. I always feel like they are laughing at me because of my terrible English, and my very clumsy manner. (An interviewee from ACT)

Regardless of the length of their sojourn in Australia, the majority of VIS seemed to remain unchanged in regard to their social world, a world in which Vietnamese interacted only with other Vietnamese. Interculturally isolated, they appeared to be a group of people choosing to separate from the host society rather than a group with a preference for integration. This might lead one to question if their expressed views concerning a preference for, and the significance of, integration were simple a right noise being voiced, or in other words, their expressed views may have presented a case of providing the 'right' answer to the interviewer's questions given their social desirability bias (Brace, 2004).

Further analysis of the interviewees' responses suggested a dilemma in which the interviewees were conflicted by certain internal and external constraints. Among these constraints, the confluence of their sense of cultural mistrust (Terrell & Terrell, 1981), and the over assertion of their ethnic identity appeared prominent. There were additional constraints of a personal (e.g., lack of confidence) and/or socio-cultural (e.g., collective vs. individual orientation) nature, but in this paper, only the constraints related to cultural mistrust and ethnic identity will be discussed.

Cultural Mistrust: "If I Don't Trust *Thou*, How Could I Befriend *Thou*?"

Cultural mistrust appeared to be a significant factor associated with the acculturation dilemma experienced by the VIS in Australia. 'Cultural mistrust' (or alternatively, 'healthy cultural paranoia'), was a term initially created to describe the lack of trust that African Americans had towards Whites, with mistrust most evident in four arenas of life, namely education and training, business and work, politics and law, and interpersonal and social relations (Terrell & Terrell, 1981). In this paper, the term 'cultural mistrust' is borrowed from this literature and modified. It refers to the inclination of some VIS to mistrust other internationals and local people. Data collected in this study suggested that this mistrust was only exhibited within the interpersonal and social relations domain.

For most of the VIS, mistrust appeared to arise from their own (direct) experiences, whereas for some others, mistrust seemed to develop vicariously, mainly via the 'word-of-mouth' influence of their Vietnamese friends. It is worthwhile to note that while living far away from home, Vietnamese students tend to perceive their co-nationals as their 'substitute family'. These friends could then be as significant as their own family in influencing their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

The interviewees spoke of the discriminatory acts of domestic students and/or local people, ranging from rather subtle to rather obvious, that partly formed their cultural mistrust based upon which they could act to counteract attacks on their self-esteem (Coll & Magnuson, 1997). Some reported being subtly excluded, and considered 'invisible' by Australians when they attempted to interact or connect with them. They described how Australia, though reputed to be an open, multicultural land, included people that did not open their heart to embrace internationals like them. For instance, two interviewees shared:

Although I have been trying [to make friends with Australians], I find it hard...Australians are not fully accepting us. Although they welcome us to stay in their land, they do not open their door to let us in. (An interviewee from NSW)

I generally cannot say what it is, but I do experience racism and discrimination in Australia. It is very subtle to describe...I just feel it. It could be in the way they look at you, or in the way they handle things with us. And it is the most obvious when you attend a party. They only turn to their Caucasian fellows to talk or to make jokes. Even if I tried to be part of the group, I soon felt excluded. (An interviewee from VIC)

Besides such 'discriminatory' incidents, reported histories of friendship with locals and other internationals also contributed to the development of VIS's sense of cultural mistrust. Some interviewees described locals and other internationals as selfish, unreliable, loud, shallow, or

materialistic. Some even described being taken advantage of, and some pointed to the lack of integrity, consistency and mutuality of other internationals in the area of friendship building. For example, in the midst of rekindled resentment, one interviewee claimed:

I can make friends with anyone but Chinese and Indian. These people are very tricky, not trustworthy, and very opportunistic. They just come to us when they think they can take advantage of us... When they think we are of no use to them, they walk away. (An interviewee from NSW)

In the presence of cultural mistrust, the interviewees rationalized why their stated 'integration' preference was not translated into accordant behaviors. Perceiving *others* as mistrustful based on past personal and social interactions, they also questioned the credibility of *others* in other arenas of life. Instead of seeking further interethnic contacts and participation in Australian society, they withdrew, and turned to each other for most aspects of their life overseas, be it help-seeking or social affiliation. Forming and living within their own ethnic enclave, they appeared to have allowed little chance for culture learning and culture shedding to take place, since these two aspects of behavioural change tend to occur only when there is sufficient, continuous, and first-hand intercultural contact (Berry et al., 2002).

Intergroup contact theorists posit that under certain conditions, intergroup contact will help reduce intergroup disharmony (Pettigrew, 1998). Such conditions often include equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support (Allport, 1954). When these conditions are not guaranteed, having members of different socio-cultural groups together does not ensure positive outcomes *per se* (Castro, 2003). Theorists like Hess, Adams, and Kleck (2009) further assert that intergroup interactions are susceptible to interpersonal misunderstandings, and that people tend to ascribe negative attributes to outgroups. Ironically, however, without intergroup interactions, people would not have a chance to develop mutual understanding, and learn how to act and react in the presence of us-ness vs. the other-ness (Castro, 2003). This may help explain the experience of VIS reported in this study. In their initial attempts to be an integral part of Australian society, they may have encountered what they described as 'discrimination', 'exclusion', imposed invisibility, and an 'outsider' status. Negative perceptions of their Australian hosts and other internationals may also have developed as a result of intergroup interactions, leading to a lack of trust. Although the cultural mistrust reported by VIS in this study may have been based on faulty, subjective assumptions and incomplete knowledge about others (given insufficient interactions), their tendency to mistrust their hosts and other internationals is likely to have influenced the way in which they acculturated. It may have hindered them from actualizing their 'integration' ideal, kept them within their 'small world' network (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004), and resulted in a negative perception of them by others as 'cliquish' people (Brebner, 2008).

On a positive note, social identity theory posits that people, when acting as group members, engage in various forms of intergroup discrimination to achieve a positive group-based self-regard (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The process of obtaining and confirming a positive self-regard among the VIS, however, seems contrary to what has been suggested by this theory. Their attempt to integrate into Australian multicultural society appears to involve an effort to *re-categorize* themselves from the category 'Vietnamese only' to a more inclusive category that embraces both Vietnamese-ness, Australian-ness, and other international-ness. Their apparent failure to achieve this given (real or perceived) host discrimination and negative perceptions of other-ness appears related to the development of a cultural mistrust tendency, which, in turn, may have caused them to retain Vietnamese patterns of behavior and to interact primarily with other Vietnamese. Based upon this interpretation, it was out-group deterioration that led to intergroup disjunction, strengthening VIS' wish to commit to in-group enhancement to achieve positive self-regard. In this sense, cultural mistrust may have acted as a positive psychological defense mechanism, helping VIS cope with subtle discrimination in a multicultural country like Australia (Biafora et al., 1993). In other words, as a coping strategy, cultural mistrust may help mitigate, as suggested by Cross (1995, p.197), 'the pain, imposition, and stigma that come when one is treated with disrespect, rudeness, and insensitivity'.

The Overemphasis Upon Vietnamese Ethnic Identity: "Once Born Vietnamese, Die Vietnamese!"

Another key factor that may help explain the acculturation dilemma of VIS in Australia is the manner in which they have constructed their cultural identity. According to Berry et al. (2002, p. 357), cultural

identity refers to 'a complex set of beliefs and attitudes that people have about themselves in relation to their culture group membership; usually these come to fore when people are in contact with another culture'. When living in another culture, how individuals perceive themselves in terms of their identity might be constructed along two dimensions. The first dimension is identification with their heritage group. The second dimension is identification with the dominant society. These two facets of cultural identity may also be referred to as "ethnic identity" and "civic identity" (Kalin & Berry, 1995), or "heritage identity" and "national identity" (Salazar & Salazar, 1998). When both of these identities are asserted, this corresponds to the integration strategy as described in acculturation theory; when neither is affirmed, this resembles a sense of marginalization; when one identity is emphasized over the other, this resembles either separation or assimilation strategies (Berry et al., 2002).

Analyses of interview data revealed a strong sense of Vietnamese ethnic identity and national pride among all of the interviewees. This is consistent with ethnic descriptions of the Vietnamese people, which suggest that the Vietnamese have a vigorous sense of ethnic identity, cultural preservation, and national independence (Pham, 1994). The interviewees indicated that they would never lose their Vietnamese identity, and expressed pride in being born and raised Vietnamese. They valued the Vietnamese spirit, as well as the land of Vietnam. They mentioned their efforts to assert Vietnamese identity while living in Australia's very multicultural society, and expressed the wish to raise their children Vietnamese. They looked down upon those who would shed their Vietnamese identity to adopt a new one, since to them, this was equal to destroying their roots. The male interviewees asserted that their sense of ethnic identity was intertwined with their sense of manliness. The need to assert their Vietnamese identity appeared as significant as the need to affirm their masculinity. As indicated by three of the interviewees:

No matter how long I stay here [in Australia], I will always identify myself as Vietnamese...That I am a Vietnamese is something that has been implanted deep down in my psyche. It will never be washed away. (An interviewee from NSW)

My children, no matter where they are born and raised, will be raised to be Vietnamese, and know what they should treasure, and pass on to other generations. (An interviewee from QSL)

I am always aware of my own identity, my Vietnamese origin, and I am proud of my origin. Vietnamese women may get married to an Australian, and they have to adapt to their husband's culture and lifestyle since they are often submissive. But Vietnamese men, we have a very strong sense of ethnic identity. We will never lose it just as we will never lose our masculinity at any expenses. (An interviewee from VIC)

In addition to asserting their Vietnamese ethnic identity, the interviewees also insisted that they would never identify with Australian larger society, or in their own words, be Australianized. Many of them expressed the view that Australia lacks a culture or an identity of its own, but represents a mixture of several different races and ethnicities. As such, nothing really stands for what they called 'Australian-unique-ness'. The quotes below exemplify several similar statements:

I would never be Australianized no matter how long I stay here. The sense of ethnic identity, and sense of nationalism are very strong in me. (An interviewee from ACT)

Australia to me has no identity at all. It is just a giant community of different races and ethnicities. It has a diversity of people, but no race really stands for it...So why do we have to identify with this very miscellaneous 'identity'? (An interviewee from VIC)

According to Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997), like ethnic identity, national identity involves feelings of belonging to, and attitudes towards the larger society. Analysis of the data suggested a deliberate dissociation of the participants in this study from their host society. Although living in Australia, they did not seem to have developed feelings of belonging to Australian society, nor positive attitudes toward Australia. As most of the interviewees asserted, no matter how long they might stay overseas, they will still identify themselves as Vietnamese (ethnic identity), and feel attached only to the land of Vietnam and to Vietnamese society (Vietnamese national identity). They placed a disproportionate emphasis on their ethnic identity over the wish to identify with their host society. If we consider their identification with Australian society 'derivative Australian national identity', then the ratio 'Vietnamese ethnic identity: derivative Australian national identity' of these sojourners would approximately equate to '100%: 0%'. Their identity assertion thus reflects a separation identity strategy (Berry et al., 2002), which according to Camilleri and Malewska-Preyre (1997), makes people prone to

cling to their own ethnic groups, and refuse interethnic contacts and participation in the larger society. This is in sharp contrast with their stated integration preference.

The literature suggests an independence between people's ethnic identity and the wish to identify with the dominant society in the sense that they are not negatively correlated (Berry et al., 2002). The views expressed by the Vietnamese sojourners in this study, however, suggested otherwise. The more they asserted their ethnic identity, the less they seemed to identify with their host society. The strong emphasis on their Vietnamese ethnic identity, together with a strong sense of national pride, may make it hard for them to be open to and develop a sense of belonging in their host society. These factors appear to have hampered the translation of their stated integration preference into reality, making them acculturate differently from their stated wish. The VIS's strong sense of ethnic identity apparently contributed to the inconsistency between stated acculturation attitudes and reported acculturation behaviours found in this study.

Although it may seem appropriate to place responsibility for their acculturation dilemma on VIS themselves, acculturation does not 'occur in a vacuum' (Sam & Berry, 2006, p. 189), but in a broad socio-cultural context. Furthermore, as suggested by Brebner (2008), acculturation does not simply occur as a matter of course when different cultural groups are present in the same setting. Just as in a chemical reaction, for different chemicals to interact in a way that could generate expected outcomes, certain mediating catalysts may be necessary. In this case, both individual efforts, and appropriate institutional interventions, beginning at the university level, may be needed. The first action that educational institutions might take could involve efforts to understand their international students as acculturating individuals and a cultural learning resource, rather than as a market to be exploited (OECD, 2004).

Limitations

Although the maximum variation sampling technique was used to help ensure an even distribution of the research participants in terms of their demographic attributes, and therefore, the generalizability of this study's findings, due to the nature of qualitative research, the findings reported may not be representative of the views of VIS in Australia. The VIS who did not participate in this study may not have had the same experiences as those of the participants in this study. One way to enhance the generalizability of this study's findings would be to implement a large-scale questionnaire survey with a more representative sample of VIS. Such a survey has been conducted by the author, and analysis of the data is currently underway.

Another limitation of this study is the dual status of the researcher, who is also a Vietnamese international student in Australia. Although being an insider may have helped the researcher approach the interviewees and capture their views, it may have also compromised the objectivity of the study's findings. Aware of this limitation, the researcher sought to remain objective throughout this research project. Also, as mentioned earlier, another study is presently underway involving a large scale survey of VIS in Australia that includes a look at similar issues. More representative and objective findings may be generated by incorporating findings of the current study into that of the forthcoming one.

Conclusion

Integration, in its best meaning, involves both the maintenance and relinquishment of one's culture of origin (Horenczyk, 1996), a combination of both culture learning and culture shedding, and an assertion of both ethnic and national identity (Georgras & Papastylianou, 1998). The views shared by the Vietnamese interviewees in this study, however, do not correspond to this ideal. Their cultural mistrust appears to have allowed little opportunity for culture learning and culture shedding to occur, and their Vietnamese ethnic identity was apparently so strong that it prevailed over their stated wish to identify with the land of their sojourn. The confluence of these internal factors seems to have led these students, though wishing to become an integral part of Australian larger society, to have separated from it instead. It may have caused what in this paper is described as an 'acculturation dilemma'. Although the internal factors causing an acculturation dilemma among VIS might not be the same as those (if any) of other AIS, the findings reported in this paper suggest a need to also take into account possible internal factors, in addition to potential external (social) constraints, when a mismatch between people's acculturation attitudes and behaviours is reported.

Note

NVIVO* is a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. NVIVO version 8.0 is the latest software in the NVIVO product line of QSR International. More information on NVIVO could be obtained from <http://www.qsrinternational.com/default.aspx>

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