

Intercultural Communication Attitudes When Watching Different Cultural Performances—Taking STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert as an Example

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Abstract—The USR plan of the Taiwan Ministry of Education hopes that universities can play an important role in social participation as promoters by using professional knowledge and creativity to improve the academic gap and promote local identity and development. The team “STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert” of Taiwan National Tsing Hua University combines science education, music, literature, and history to provide courses for local indigenous schools and conducted its third tour on January 6, 2024. This study takes this opportunity to explore whether there are differences in the intercultural communication attitudes of audiences before and after watching a performance from a cultural background other than their own, to understand whether informal education in the form of musicals can play a role. The research tool is the “Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale” modified from Huang Wen-Ding and Lin Xiu-Qing’s “Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale for Grade 5 and 6 Students”. The experimental participants are non-indigenous audiences who watched the tour and statistical methods used include Paired Sample t-test. The result shows that watching a performance from a cultural background other than one’s own can effectively increase Intercultural Communication Attitudes and confirm that informal lessons delivered through musicals can also achieve a subtle effect. Since the project plans to have a large-scale tour at the end of the year, this study expects to use this opportunity to conduct further research.

Keywords—intercultural communication attitude, University Social Responsibility (USR), informal curriculum

I. INTRODUCTION

Taiwan Ministry of Education has implemented the “University Social Responsibility (USR) Project” since 2018. It focuses on local connections, talent cultivation, international connections and other aspects and various issues. It is expected that the USR Project will play an important role in the university’s social participation as an important role and promoter. USR project encourages the use of professional knowledge and creativity to improve the learning-application gap; promote local identity and development, and then move into the international vision. Among them, the “STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert” team was formed in 2023 and co-hosted by three professors from Taiwan National Tsinghua University, Chiu Fu-Yuan, Chang Fang-Yu, and Liu, Liu Shu-Chin. It is an interdisciplinary team of science education, music, literature, and history, and has been provided fixed medical STEAM courses at Jianshih Primary School for two years. The “STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert” team planning team has conducted two performances in Jianshih Township and Taiwan National Tsing Hua University since 2023. The third tour was held on

January 6, 2024, in cooperation with the Schools of the “TNUNAN Curriculum Development Strategy Alliance (Atayal Experimental Education), Atayal Academy, Zhi-Shan Foundation, and Hsinchu County University of Indigenous Tribes, to jointly promote the importance of medical education. As a member of this project, the author is curious about the impact an opera can bring on the audience as an informal education through the attitude of intercultural competence of non-indigenous in Taiwan after receiving the rendering of indigenous culture. This is also in line with the two indicators of Quality Education and Sustainable Cities and Communities among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, which are of great significance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Indigenous Cultural Preservation and Educational Equality

Indigenous peoples are the earliest inhabitants of Taiwan. After the rule of the Dutch, Spanish, Zheng regime, Qing dynasty, and Japan, they not only migrated to the mountains but their culture also gradually disappeared. This makes them a relatively disadvantaged group in Taiwan’s socio-economic context. According to the “2021 Indigenous Employment Status Survey Report,” the current education levels of Indigenous people were compared with those of the entire population. The proportion of indigenous people with high school, vocational education, or below is higher than that of the total population, while the proportion with college education or above is lower than that of the total population [1]. Scholars have identified several issues faced by Indigenous people, including high rates of single-parent households, grandparent caregiving, care for Indigenous girls, the elderly and disabled, unemployment and poverty, lack of medical resources, urban adaptation for Indigenous people, and insufficient welfare resources [2]. Although the government has tried for many years to restore indigenous culture and provide them with more educational resources, one-way mainstream culture is imposed on indigenous people is through education [3]. The so-called education predominantly features materials from the mainstream group [4], neglecting the cultural values of minority groups. It is evident that only by sincerely accepting different cultures and allowing them to develop without the influence of the mainstream can the continuation of indigenous culture and true educational equality be achieved.

B. Intercultural Acceptance of Han People with Indigenous Culture

Lee [5] conducted a three-year study on Han learners' attitudes toward learning about indigenous culture. In addition to supporting actual interaction with indigenous people instead of classroom lectures, she also found that the changing attitudes of Han learners including an appreciation of perception, affirmation and ethnic, equality and respect, enthusiasm and willingness to participate in ethnic social actions, and the improvement of social distance. However, the scholar also pointed out that there are still few documents on the changes in Han people's attitudes towards indigenous ethnic groups, or the so-called intercultural identity. Researchers who continue to work hard for multicultural learning environments and relations between the original Han ethnic groups are needed.

Lee and Lin [6] conducted a study on classrooms where teachers and students belong to different ethnicities and found that when Han teachers in Indigenous areas asked questions, their question types tended to be low-level closed questions. Furthermore, if Indigenous children were treated as only responders by teachers, they tend not to answer. However, when Indigenous children have a medium in front of them, they can answer and co-construct a text that walks between reality and virtuality with the child in the audience. In addition, if they are not designated in the group, children often cross-question and respond. They also found that the questions asked by Indigenous teachers in Han Chinese areas were mostly open-ended and often lacked system structure. It caused children to make random guesses that affected the course. As a result, during discussions, teachers often overextended or changed the topic, which also affected the course. However, if questions are asked in the context of children's experiences, children will be provided with opportunities to engage in peer scaffolding dialogue. It can be seen that both the Han and the Indigenous people need to know more about the culture of the other ethnicity so that they will not talk to each other with difficulty.

Ke [7] conducted research by interviewing Han teachers who taught in indigenous areas. The results found that if teachers increase their sensitivity to cultural understanding, they can reduce maladaptive conditions. He also found that Han teachers will use intercultural interaction to learn with each other and have perspectives of multiple intelligences to expand the teaching experience. However, they have biases in cultural knowledge and bad habits of focusing on competition and lacking in sharing. Nowadays, Han teachers are still the majority in aboriginal schools in Taiwan. So it is very important to include intercultural abilities in basic education and teacher training with the first step which is starting with an intercultural attitude.

C. Intercultural Communication Attitude

After sorting out the definitions of Chinese and Western scholars, Huang and Zhan [8] defined "intercultural competence" as "the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from different countries and cultures in various cultural contexts." Intercultural competence was also organized into three aspects: "attitude", "knowledge and understanding" and "skills", but was added to four after conducting semi-structured interviews. They are

"willingness and attitude", "knowledge and understanding", "Skills and Application" and "Multiple Thinking and Judgment". Among them, the attitude part was prioritized in the ranking, to emphasize an open mind and respect for the culture of others [9]. As a result, the Taiwanese-localized questionnaire "Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale for Grade 5 and 6 Students" came out in the following year [10], which pushed forward intercultural research in Taiwan. However, it is a pity that the purpose of these intercultural developments is mainly to equip Taiwanese students with international abilities instead of applying such a precious questionnaire to the intercultural among Taiwan's native ethnicities. This is exactly what this research trying to do. After all, Intercultural communication is for communication between people from different cultures, so it should not exclude Han and Indigenous peoples.

III. TOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

This study aims to understand whether there are differences in the intercultural communication attitudes of the audience before and after watching a performance from a cultural background other than their own, to understand whether informal education in the form of musicals can play a role.

The "STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert" was taken from the historical story of Inoue Inosuke, who practiced medicine and preached in Jianshi county during the Japanese colonial period, and combined it with the medical practice story of Atayal boy Lessa. It aims to advocate for the medical education needs in rural areas and inspire young people to aspire.

Since the questionnaire survey was conducted through the "STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert" event, the research tool "Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale" modified from Huang Wen-Ding and Lin Xiu-Qing's "Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale for Grade 5 and 6 Students" [10] according to the research purpose, the background of intercultural indigenous areas. The results found that if teachers increase their sensitive cultures and the characteristics of opera concerts. After some minor word modifications, the questionnaire was handed over to three experts for expert validity inspection, and modified into a 10-question questionnaire suitable for completion in a short time.

After the content of the questionnaire had been finalized and three reverse questions (2, 4, 7) had been designed, it was distributed on-site at the third tour event of the "STEAM-TNUNAN Opera Concert" on January 6, 2024. The participants are the attendees of that event. The pre-test was conducted before watching the musical, and the post-test was conducted after watching the musical. A total of 44 questionnaires were recovered, and 35 were valid questionnaires, with a recovery rate of 79.5%.

IV. STATISTICS

Excluding 3 Aboriginal spectators, 33 valid questionnaires were retained and analyzed using SPSS 25. Descriptive statistical analysis, reliability analysis, and paired t-test were applied.

V. RESULT

A. Descriptive Statistic

What presented in Table 1 is descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive statistic of intercultural communication attitudes

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	32	31.00	47.00	40.94	4.13
Post-test	32	37.00	50.00	43.50	3.82
Valid N	32				

B. Reliability

The Cronbach's α of the Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale in pre-test and post-test are .714 and .723.

All the above questionnaires are in a good reliability range.

C. Paired t-test

The paired t-test (Table 2) shows that non-aboriginal people can significantly improve their intercultural communication attitudes after watching musicals from cultures other than their own.

Table 2. Paired t-tests of intercultural communication attitudes

	M	N	SD	t
Pre-test	40.94	32	4.13	
Post-test	43.50	32	3.82	-4.757***

***: p.001

D. Maan-Whitney U Test

The Maan-Whitney U Test (Table 3) shows that Whether in the pretest or posttest, gender differences did not affect intercultural communication attitudes.

Table 3. Maan-Whitney U test of gender

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sun of Ranks
Pre-test	Male	9	16.50	148.50
	Female	23	16.50	379.50
	Total	32		
Post-test	Male	9	15.11	136.00
	Female	23	17.04	392.00
	Total	32		
		Pre-test	Post-test	
Mann-Whitney U		103.500	91.000	
Z		0.000	-0.526	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000	0.599	
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]		1.000a	0.621b	

a Grouping Variable: Gender

b Not corrected for ties

VI. DISCUSSION

Huang [9] compiled the research of foreign scholars and found that scholars often use Intercultural competence and intercultural communication competence interchangeably. After comparing the definitions of these scholars, he believed that intercultural communication competence emphasizes communication in interaction, so "Intercultural competence" is used in his research. Furthermore, the attitude aspect of the questionnaire "Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale for Grade 5 and 6 Students" developed by him and Lin Xiu-Qing is similar to the affective part of Chen and Starosta's [11] classification of intercultural communication competence, that is, intercultural sensitivity. Since Intercultural Sensitivity and intercultural communication

attitudes both express emotional aspects of intercultural communication competence [10], they will be discussed together in the following contents in this study.

The result of this study shows that watching an opera performance from a culture other than one's own can improve self-intercultural communication attitudes, and there is no difference between men and women. Li Shau-Hua [12] explored the correlation and predictive power between the cultural capital and intercultural communication attitudes of senior elementary school students in Pingtung County. The scholar found that the richer the cultural capital of senior elementary school students in Pingtung County, the stronger their intercultural communication attitudes. Also, those who go abroad with more experience are more tolerant of the ambiguity and uncertainty of unfamiliar things. In addition, girls are more willing to be exposed to different cultures. Cheng Ya-Wen [13] conducted a ten-week international education course with each class lasting forty minutes to compare whether international education can affect English learning motivation and intercultural communication attitudes. The results showed that 5th-grade students had significant differences in English learning motivation, while there was no significant difference in intercultural communication attitudes.

For the intercultural sensitivity part of the emotion/attitude aspect of intercultural competency, Wu Hsin-Rong [14] studied the intercultural sensitivity performance of students majoring in English at the Southern University of Science and Technology in Taiwan. The results showed that those with foreign travel experience and those with foreign relatives and friends have higher scores in social participation, communicative confidence, and intercultural sensitivity than those without foreign travel experience and relatives. On the contrary, those with study tour experience and those with experience of living abroad are better than those without experience only in communicative confidence. Chen Hui-Ru & Wang Ru-Yu [15] learned that cultural sensitivity is highly related to the travel experience and language ability by exploring the intercultural sensitivity of Chinese self-guided travelers from different regions or nationalities under different travel experiences. Those with higher Intercultural sensitivity are mostly self-guided tourists who travel more frequently, go abroad more frequently, travel longer, have strong language skills, and are married.

The factors that affect the emotional/attitude aspects of Taiwanese people's intercultural competence are relatively clear from the above literature. However, it remains to be further studied whether they have foreign travel experience and foreign relatives/friends, gender differences, and cultural influence intervention methods (such as indigenous musicals or international education). In addition, there are a few studies on the "attitude" aspect of the three dimensions of intercultural competence in Taiwan currently. Research by Wu Jia-Fen [16] also shows that research on cultural sensitivity in Taiwan is still based on empirical research through foreign questionnaires. The main purpose is to investigate and explore the variables that affect intercultural sensitivity and test the effectiveness of international exchanges. There is little innovation and a lack of development of measurement tools for localization in Taiwan, and there is less research among local ethnic groups. Because

of this background consideration, localized tools are wanted to conduct localized research. That is why the author chose a localized questionnaire designed by Huang Wen-Ding & Lin Xiu-Qing [10] to conduct intercultural communication attitudes of Han people toward indigenous culture.

VII. CONCLUSION

The results show that watching a performance from a cultural background other than one's own can effectively increase intercultural communication attitudes. It confirms that informal lessons delivered through musicals can also achieve a subtle effect and enhance acceptance and identification of cultures other than one's own. The next step in the research can be to explore the experience of contact with indigenous culture (including tourism) and the presence of relatives and friends of indigenous origin as background factors.

APPENDIX

Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale

- 1) I like to meet people from different cultures and listen to them who share what is happening in their lives.
- 2) I don't like to learn a language other than my native language.
- 3) I think that every different culture has something worth learning.
- 4) I feel nervous when speaking in front of people from different cultures.
- 5) When judging a person from a culture different from mine, not only listen to what he/she says but observe what he/she does.
- 6) I am willing to look for new things whenever I go to a strange place.
- 7) I am not interested in knowing what happened in the past in different cultures.
- 8) I think every culture has the value of preservation.
- 9) I like to collect decorations or artworks from different cultures (such as postcards, and handicrafts).
- 10) I like to watch performances or videos that introduce different cultures and customs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Hsieh I Ling is responsible for researching and analyzing data, and Dr. Fu Yuan Chiu is the supervising professor who is responsible for planning research design and research tools. All authors had approved the final version.

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