

CROSSING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES WITH A CUPPA: A CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL WELLBEING WITHIN A POSTGRADUATE PEER CIRCLE

Sherridan Emery
University of Tasmania, Launceston

Halyna Pavlyshyn
University of Tasmania, Launceston

Mohsen Hedayati
University of Tasmania, Launceston

Shakila Nur
University of Tasmania, Launceston

Abstract

International postgraduate students often experience lack of cultural and social exposure which can lead to the decreased participation in collaborative projects. This, combined with a strong focus on their own research projects can create difficulties in finding common ground for scholarly cooperation. Furthermore, cultural diversity amongst postgraduate students can exacerbate academic isolation.

The question pursued in this small-scale research study is how does interaction within a culturally diverse peer circle of postgraduate students contribute to cultural wellbeing?

This paper reports on a qualitative case study conducted at one Australian university by a self-organised group of postgraduate students. Interviews and participants' reflections were thematically analysed and discussed in relation to Bourdieu's theories of capital and Hofstede's sociolinguistic theory of cultural dimensions.

The results of the case study reveal the ways in which the weekly "Australian Tea" peer circle enhanced the social and cultural capital of participating students while also creating opportunities for effective research collaborations. The study highlights the importance of cross-cultural interaction for the cultural wellbeing of both international and domestic postgraduate students.

Key words: wellbeing, cultural wellbeing, postgraduate education, social capital, cultural capital, Bourdieu, Hofstede

Introduction

The wellbeing of students is an area of increasing interest in Higher Education. Indeed education theorist Gert Biesta (2014) contends, "the ultimate orientation of all education should be to the wellbeing and flourishing of our students" (p. 10). We report on a recent study exploring the concept of *cultural wellbeing* with a group of postgraduate students through an inquiry into how a self-organised weekly "Australian Tea" social program supported postgraduate students' cultural wellbeing.

In the first section of the paper we examine current literature discussing student wellbeing in higher education and emerging ideas surrounding cultural wellbeing. Next we introduce the case of the

Australian Tea program employing ‘insider’ perspectives to describe this social program (Chavez, 2008). The four authors engaged in this case study as participant researchers, joining in the social program, gathering and analysing data from participants in the program and co-authoring the paper. We discuss the results which emerged from this study of the Australian Tea program, outlining the ways that postgraduate student participants in the program perceived it in relation to their ideas of cultural wellbeing. We conclude by sharing insights and provocations for postgraduate education based on this inquiry into cultural wellbeing.

Postgraduate student wellbeing

Postgraduate student wellbeing is a fledgling area of research within the expanding research field of wellbeing in higher education. As the number of international students undertaking postgraduate studies in Australia has increased rapidly in recent years, student wellbeing research has responded accordingly (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2008).

Postgraduate students face a range of challenges to their wellbeing, and international students encounter more complexities and challenges than is typical for Australian students according to Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson (2008). Common difficulties encountered by international students, including international PhD candidates, are unfamiliar ways of learning and teaching, discrimination, and the lack of understanding and mental support from locals which can result in loneliness and therefore academic isolation (Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson, 2008). Consequently the challenges that students confront can impact negatively upon their psychological wellbeing and interfere with their education (Lin & Yi, 1997) which warrants further research in the area of postgraduate student wellbeing.

In this research we focus on subjective wellbeing which is described as quality of life (Diener & Suh, 1997) or self-reports of how well life is going (Gong, Cassells, & Keegan, 2011). According to Diener and Suh (1997), subjective wellbeing approaches assume “that wellbeing can be defined by people’s conscious experiences – in terms of hedonic feelings or cognitive satisfactions” which justifies asking people about their life experiences “in the context of his or her own standards” (p. 191).

Research context

In 2016 the four authors of this paper participated in a social group of postgraduate students called the Australian Tea Program (ATP) which will be described below. We conducted a small scale mixed methods study which involved interviews with eleven members of the ATP. The results presented in this paper are reported from the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions which focused on students’ interpretations of cultural wellbeing and experiences within the ATP. We coded the qualitative data, then identified key themes using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Background to the Australian Tea Program

In early 2016, one of the authors of this paper, a first year PhD candidate asked an elder member of the postgraduate community to join international postgraduate students for a weekly cup of tea and conversation in English to afford the international students opportunities to talk in English with a ‘native speaker’ in a social setting. The Friday ‘Australian Tea’ sessions began on this basis initially within one faculty, but soon opened up to the wider university community of Australian and non-Australian postgraduate students. In this article we refer to this self-organised weekly group event as the Australian Tea Program (ATP).

Conducted weekly in one of the university’s music rooms, ATP attracted participation from between 5 and 18 postgraduate students who sat together and shared a cup of tea and conversation each Friday afternoon. Participation in the group was free and no official membership application was required. Topics of conversation emerged from initial salutary conversations.

ATP sessions became occasions for sharing cultural celebrations from students’ home countries (for

example Chinese New Year dumplings, Fiji's celebrations following their Olympic win in the rugby union). Frequently ATP members discussed aspects of their postgraduate studies such as progress with milestones of candidature including ethics approval and confirmation, and more experienced postgraduate students in the group shared their experiences of similar challenges during their candidature.

Over time the ATP evolved to include occasional Friday lunches in the postgraduate space where students brought national dishes they had prepared to share. When postgraduate students became aware of a forthcoming Peace Festival in the region they brought the celebration of peace into the postgraduate space with a pre-festival feast. Postgraduate students invited academic staff, and several staff members attended the celebration.

Members of the ATP group expressed interest in learning more about the Aboriginal culture of the region and an invitation was extended to an Elder in Residence of a university to an afternoon tea session. The university Elder brought ochre with him, explaining its use in cultural celebrations by Aboriginal men and women, before leading a painting session for students. These are just a small selection of events and activities that members of the ATP became involved in during the undertaking of this study.

Theoretical background to the study

In discussing the concept of cultural wellbeing, we acknowledge Barker's (2012) interpretation of culture as questions of shared social meaning, and "the various ways we make sense of the world" (p. 7) as constituted in norms, values, beliefs, symbolic expression, as well as practices (Binder, Blair-Loy, Evans, Ng & Schudson, 2008; Griswold, 2012). It is through these ideas that we explore cultural wellbeing and practices which promote cultural wellbeing amongst postgraduate students.

We interpret the cultural aspect of wellbeing broadly, noting that interpretations of the meaning of the word culture are contested. Literature specifically relating to cultural wellbeing is nascent in the field of education. Particularly relevant for this study are concepts of connections and relationships, as well as the roles these might serve in creating conditions for cultural wellbeing to emerge (Emery, Miller, West & Nailon, 2015). Research conducted in a range of nations has found that relationships which enhance connections amongst individuals and community are important for wellbeing (Dockery, 2010).

The theoretical framework for this study centres around two theories: Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions (1994) and Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital (1986). We combine these approaches, despite their contrasting paradigms, to highlight tendencies in social interactions which might be attributed to cultural differences before attempting to trace how these interactions might be valuable for the PhD candidates

Hofstede viewed people's approaches towards work as being shaped by national culture (Hofstede, 1994) with the suggestion that cultural background may influence both competition and collaboration among employees. In this study we focus on Hofstede's individualism and collectivism cultural dimension, noting that Hofstede's theories encompassed six dimensions¹. While this theory was developed to study the ways for effective collaboration in workplaces, it is applicable for researching postgraduate students in the Australian context, since Australian PhD candidates are not only students, but also employees of the University.

A postgraduate student's approach toward work and willingness to cooperate may be influenced by their degree of individualism. Hofstede contends that representatives of cultures with a high index of individualism (IDV), tend to value their free personal time, freedom to choose their own approach to work and constant challenges at their workplace (ibid, p. 51). The most prominent examples of cultures with high IDV are Americans, Australians and British. Several members of the ATP are Australian students, from a national culture with high IDV, and according to this theory it could be anticipated that these students would focus on individual rather than collaborative projects.

In contrast to Australian students, postgraduate students from cultures with a low IDV would be more likely to value working in a team where they can fully use their skills and benefit from skills of their co-workers. People from nations with low IDV often have tight family connections with extended families. In relation to the postgraduate experience, PhD candidates from nations with low IDV may value educational courses, active involvement in social gatherings and events, and opportunities to collaborate on team projects. The members of the ATP who are from nations of low IDV according to Hofstede include postgraduate students from Fiji, Ghana, China, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, Nepal and Iran.

We are aware of limitations of Hofstede's theory including the potential for essentialising or overgeneralising culture. Rather than focusing on the differences between the cultures of origin of postgraduate students, in this study we focused on connections between the students and the emergence of collaborative projects.

Social and cultural capital

Bourdieu's theories of capital encompassed social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital and have been discussed widely in relation to education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This paper will address both social and cultural capital. Social capital has been variously defined in sociological literature, however we limit our focus to Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249).

In terms of cultural capital, Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes between three forms that are of relevance to the ATP and thus to our research. First, institutionalised cultural capital concerns educational attainment and qualifications, and in this instance refers to postgraduate study within a university setting where participants in the group were seeking to earn PhD qualifications. Second, objectified cultural capital refers to the possession of cultural goods and artefacts, and third, Bourdieu's concept of embodied cultural capital refers to people's values, skills, knowledge and tastes.

Research in the field of public health highlights positive associations between social capital and health (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Uphoff et al., 2013) and while health research examining the effects of cultural capital is scarce, recent studies strongly suggest that participation in cultural activities, including the arts, is positively related to health (Pinxten & Lievens, 2014). The findings of this case study are presented in the next section and discussed in relation to the ideas of cultural wellbeing drawn from the research and theoretical literature presented earlier.

Analysis of findings

We commence our analysis by exploring the meaning of cultural wellbeing offered by participants of the ATP before considering their perceptions of how the ATP supported cultural wellbeing.

Meanings of cultural wellbeing

Participants interpreted the meaning of cultural wellbeing in ways that reflected two distinct ideas. First, for some members of the group, feeling comfortable and free was paramount. In the second theme, participants highlighted the importance of one's cultural inheritance and preserving their cultural identities in a multicultural society.

Cultural wellbeing as feeling free and comfortable

The freedom to live according to one's own values was regarded as central to cultural wellbeing. One student stated that cultural wellbeing encompassed "not being discriminated [against]" and a "feeling of being safe enough in order to live freely and to live the best way you can" (Student 3). This resonated with another participant's interpretation of cultural wellbeing as "a position where I can represent myself without feeling any hesitation in terms of my language skill, my religious

background” (Student 4). Other students emphasised that freedom of expression and an absence of stereotypes about their culture was central to the meaning they made of cultural wellbeing (Students 2 and 8).

Apart from highlighting the importance of freedom, ATP members also noted that “feeling comfortable” mattered to them. One participant suggested cultural wellbeing was:

being comfortable enough to communicate with people and being able to deal with difficulties that happen in the society [...] not feeling threatened. And feeling free enough, like in my home country where I can talk to people, to give my opinions, to negotiate with people (Student 2).

Other students perceived cultural wellbeing as feeling “comfortable in this environment” (Student 7) and “being very comfortable in your shoes because you have a really deep understanding of where you come from” (Student 9). Through these comments the idea emerged that cultural wellbeing involved freedom from discrimination or persecution, freedom of expression, and feeling comfortable.

Cultural wellbeing as a cultural inheritance

For some participants, cultural wellbeing was deeply connected with cultural identity and the knowledge, skills and practices they inherited from their cultural backgrounds.

One participant described cultural wellbeing as “the knowledge, the skills that we have adapted from other culture and that help us to become a better person, to survive in the society, progress, and I would say, be happy” (Student 6), while another suggested it was “the most important practices that impact on people in a positive way” (Student 10). Student 8 commented “If you are living in a diverse culture, how you sustain your culture in that culture, in this diverse environment, maybe, is a cultural wellbeing. That’s my assumption.” He added that it was important to him that his cultural and religious beliefs were “understood”, “respected” and “integrated” into Australian culture.

These interpretations centred around cultural aspects of people’s identities and their roles in people’s lives. Next we considered the ATP through participants’ perceptions of the activities of the group in relation to cultural wellbeing.

Cultural wellbeing as crossing boundaries

International postgraduate students bring with them values, beliefs and practices which reflect their cultural backgrounds. The findings suggested that although ATP meetings started as conversations about the Australian language and culture, they evolved into discussions about differences and similarities among various national cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Participants indicated that the ATP was valuable for them to learn about each other’s beliefs and values (Student 8 and 9), to broaden their knowledge about the cultures of others (Student 1 and 7), and “to increase cultural proficiency” (Student 7), through connecting with people from other cultures. One participant summed it up well: “the exchange of views is very important, because we cannot live in isolation. We have to be integrated” (Student 8).

Discussing cultures of other people can lead to deeper understandings of one’s own culture(s). Participants mentioned that learning about the beliefs of others helped them to better understand their own beliefs and values. One participant commented

[hearing] ideas about the other culture, makes it easier for me to understand what my culture is, what are the differences between my culture and the different countries... I have a big picture about my own culture, [from] learning other cultures... maybe, I know my culture better. (Student 11)

Another participant suggested that a “deep understanding of where you come from [...] allows you to feel comfortable within a whole range of cultures, because you are much more accepting, more inquisitive about other cultures, and you open yourself up to the world” (Student 9). Similarly, Student 2 explained “[w]henever we were talking about other cultures, directly or indirectly, we start thinking about our culture as well, and, maybe some things that we were not aware of before, we became aware

of them and contemplate”. The findings of this study suggested that conversations about culture in a multicultural community such as the ATP fostered understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity, valuing cultures as an enrichment and source of cultural wellbeing.

Safe space: crossing boundaries in a friendly environment

In this study we sought to understand what contributed to a sense of cultural wellbeing within a multicultural community of postgraduate students. Participants suggested that the valuing of diversity and the cultural sharing enabled them to feel more open for starting conversations within and outside of the ATP. We refer to this change as an emergence of safe space – a social environment in which people feel free and comfortable enough to begin a discussion.

Student 3 explained that at the beginning of her PhD it was not easy to start a conversation about cultural backgrounds, because “when you are talking about your own culture, you’re always a bit afraid that people will not understand you” (Student 3). She explained how sharing cultural experiences in the ATP “freely and securely” without fear of being misinterpreted “enabled us to feel closer and to be more open for the discussion of different cultural aspects” (Student 3). Another participant explained that as a person who came from mostly monocultural background, she appreciated the exposure to other cultures, that ATP provided noting that the regular ATP meetings succeed to build a “friendly environment” in which one could communicate “comfortably” (Student 7).

Building closer interpersonal relationships: socialising, mentoring, collaborating

The safe space within the ATP had a positive effect on social interactions and cultural wellbeing. Initiatives such as ATP provide students with a venue for regular face to face meetings, which is important for postgraduate students, particularly for online students as mentioned by one participant (Student 7). The meetings created “a free space” where students could talk about topics not related to academic research (Student 8). This led to generating a common discourse which continued into conversations outside of ATP meetings, enhancing social interactions among postgraduate students of various cultural backgrounds. One participant described how the program helped him to overcome boundaries in communicating with other people: “I’m naturally a very individualistic person and I don’t communicate a lot. Being part of this [ATP] is really building me up and giving me the confidence to interact with people” (Student 9). This resonated with a response from another ATP participant who said that these meetings “really improved [her] confidence in communicating with people from different backgrounds” (Student 7).

Furthermore, two participants credited the increased social interactions between postgraduate students with creating more meaningful relationships which provided them with emotional support. Student 4 commented: “participating in ATP has expanded my friendship circle [of people] who are from different parts of the world [...] The way they used to talk to me, really helped me to heal my mental pressure. I really love this group”. Similarly, Student 3 explained:

I believe that the ATP helped me a lot in terms of finding some relaxation and some mental support, because very often ... we were also discussing our postgraduate experience, how we are going through it, what difficulties we have encountered, and how we dealt with them... Sharing of all these ideas and difficulties, and feeling that you are not alone in this, I think, really helps.

The rapport built within the postgraduate community enabled people to be more open in asking each other for advice related to PhD procedures. Some students indicated an increased willingness to ask for advice from their peers after participating in ATP. One participant said that postgraduate community “has become a much more shared enterprise in terms of our studies [...] people ask and relate to one another in terms of asking [others] questions around their PhD” (Student 9). Another participant spoke of a “culture of help” developing out of the ATP, commenting: “one thing that [ATP] has enhanced here is the connection [...] that’s been made with others PhD candidates. As we become closer, we tend to help each other out” (Student 6). She further described this “culture of help” as a crossing of a boundary:

the ATP leads to breaking that barrier, that wall that is between the people and when that wall breaks down what happens there is more openness between each other, and so you are free to give your ideas to other people and you are able to help them out better” (Student 6).

Hence, the “friendly environment” of ATP and the increased social interactions within the group resulted in the emergence of mentoring among postgraduate students. Postgraduate students at the early stages of research sought advice from their peers at the later stages of candidature to help them overcome difficulties.

Finally, the willingness to communicate on various topics and to provide each other with emotional support led to collaborative projects being initiated amongst some members of the group. During one of the ATP meetings a few participants discussed the idea of developing a mutual writing project which could bring together various skills and expertise of postgraduate students. As a result, three small research projects have been designed and implemented. One of the initiators of the emergent collaborative projects commented: “we have been starting working together a little bit more on projects, and I know the current project that I am working on [...] is actually giving me insight into my own piece of work” (Student 9). We envisage that this is just a beginning and that further collaborative projects will emerge from the ATP group members.

Discussion

Social and cultural capital grows from a humble cup of tea

The ‘humble’ practice of a weekly meeting for a cup of tea evolved and enlarged over time to encompass other activities and practices. One participant described the evolution:

We started from the discussions there, just with tea parties, and this led to our lunch parties... From the Australian Tea Programme we have developed the new and bigger version of that, of being together, of integration, and now we have lunch parties once a month. So from a little humble beginning now we have a bigger one. I think the integration of the ideas, bringing people together, people with different ideas, different views... gives people freedom to do lots of things. (Student 6)

These comments depict a sense of freedom emerging from the connections forming between people with different worldviews and ideas. A range of themes developed in the regular ATP meetings as another student explained:

Every Friday meeting we tried to have a theme. Sometimes this theme included a festival, or we had some other activities. For example, we used our Friday activities as a Pre-Peace Festival... It was really interesting. And sometimes we used these activities to learn about different people. Once African children came and they tried to sing us some songs. (Student 5)

Thus the ATP enriched opportunities for encountering people from other places and for learning more about the cultures of other members of the group. The evolving practices of the group provided a sense of freedom for postgraduate students to interact together. Occasionally the activities of the ATP afforded opportunities for postgraduate students to build relationships with faculty members from the university community as Student 10 revealed:

The peace festival - it was nice... everybody brought foods... And some people from Administration came to join us [...] Normally you just see their names in the staff list. But when they see a new person, they come and introduce one another. It helps in building relationships amongst one another for the future.

Through participation in the ATP postgraduate students were able to engage with each other as friends, peers and collaborators, and with members of faculty, building social and cultural capital through the activities and practices which developed within the group. We found evidence of Bourdieu’s (1986) three forms of cultural capital in participants’ responses. Institutionalised cultural capital was enhanced by members of the group assisting each other with difficulties experienced in their candidature. Further enhancement of institutionalised capital occurred through ATP members

collaborating on conference presentations which helped them to improve their research skills. Experiences which emerged within the group, including the sharing of national foods, constituted objectified cultural capital which provided opportunities to reflect each individual's sense of cultural identity which participants described as important for cultural wellbeing. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of embodied cultural capital was evident in the values, customs and knowledge which participants were able to share openly and freely within the group through the conversations and stories which were central to the Friday afternoon tea sessions.

All participants indicated that ATP had enhanced their sense of cultural wellbeing and viewed the weekly social gathering as an important part of their postgraduate experience. One participant commented:

In my case, mixing with these wonderful people has increased my being and at the same time, I have learnt about others in a respectful manner. I really love this group.... really I do. (Student 4)

It's a cross national group and you learn a lot from what is being done in this community.... It has really helped me and I really understand the human relationships because I am sitting in a group with people from all backgrounds. I enjoy it academically and socially. It's really had an impact on my life while I'm here. (Student 10)

One participant commented that ATP had brought "a sense of life" to the postgraduate space, which reflected a sentiment evident in comments from other participants that there had been a discernible enhancement in the postgraduate study environment within the faculty. This notion can be considered in relation to Bourdieu's (1986) theories of *habitus*, as a site of interplay between structure and practice (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff and Virk, 2012). In this article we limit our discussion to the practice aspect of *habitus*, with the intention of focusing on structural aspects relating to ATP in future publications.

According to Calhoun et al (2012) "*habitus* refers to embodied knowledge, especially the ways people learn to generate improvisations – to say new things (even using old words),... or to play new music interactively with others" (p. 329). Within the ATP, conversations and music-making emerged spontaneously as the group shared stories and socialised. The sharing of national foods also began originally as an improvisation, with members simply sharing their lunch brought from home. Over time this practice became intentional, with plans made for bringing national plates to share to mark particular celebrations, such as the Peace Festival.

Robbins applied Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in "making sense both of the persistence of old values in new behaviour and of the ways in which new collective values were actively constructed by individuals who had been dispossessed of their places in an automatically self-harmonising system" (2000, p. 28). We conceive of the ATP as such a self-harmonising system which enabled the emergence of cultural wellbeing through the valuing and sharing of diversity.

The self-organised nature of the ATP appeared to be relevant to its success in that participation was internally rather than externally motivated. Members participated for intrinsic rewards in contrast to extrinsic rewards. Numerous members of the group were from nations with low index of individualism (Hofstede 1991). Interestingly, while non-Australian postgraduate students emphasised the social benefits of the ATP, such as being a part of a community, the Australian participants of the case study highlighted the significant influence of the ATP on their academic life and their personal achievement. For example, one of the Australian students while describing the effect of ATP on her academic life says: "So, I now have some ideas I am going to bring into analysis sections of my PhD" (Student 9). Representatives of such countries as Fiji, Ghana, China, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, Nepal and Iran highly appreciate friendly meaningful relationships with their colleagues as part of their work life. They tend to seek advice from their peers and value working on team projects where they can use their skills. Therefore, according to Hofstede's theory, the presence of international students in the program enriched the various ways in which ATP influenced social life of the postgraduate community. Cognisant of the risk of overgeneralising, we attribute the success of ATP to the combination of international and Australian postgraduate students and their valuing of social

interactions and looking for new academic opportunities.

Postgraduate students' positive experiences of the ATP and their perceptions of how it had enhanced their experiences of postgraduate study suggests that this self organised group provided more than just social and emotional support for group members. Evidence from earlier research into student wellbeing has found that successful coping strategies by postgraduate students "influence positive adaptation, the reduction of psychological distress, a sense of psychological or emotional wellbeing, satisfaction and better academic performance" (Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson (2008). We acknowledge that the small scope of the research study reported here limits the claims we are able to make in relation to the ATP and postgraduate students' emotional wellbeing, however we believe that exploring such areas is important. We are interested in developing further understandings of how social and cultural practices might support postgraduate students' experiences of increased emotional and cultural wellbeing and enhanced academic success. We suggest that this is an important nexus for future research.

Conclusion

This paper reports on a study of the Australian Tea Program (ATP), a social peer circle for postgraduate students in an Australian university, and explores the ways in which the program supported students' cultural wellbeing.

From the inception of the ATP, the crossing of cultural boundaries became an evolving phenomenon, where from the weekly afternoon tea on Fridays, other activities and practices took place within the postgraduate community, which increased students' social and cultural capital.

The study found that the ATP program provided both international and Australian postgraduate students with opportunities to explore cultural diversity, which resulted in the cultivation of safe space and a friendly environment. Participants indicated that the relationships built during the ATP meetings enhanced their emotional wellbeing and increased social interactions amongst them. Cooperation and collaboration emerged as a consequence.

We believe there is merit in the further research of the practices that support cultural wellbeing for the benefit of all students. This study, which privileges postgraduate students' voices, makes a small yet important contribution to understandings of cultural wellbeing and highlights the foundational role of cross-cultural interactions amongst both international and domestic postgraduate students.

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ⁱ Hofstede's six cultural dimensions include: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence.