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FEATURE

**Pros and Cons of Multicultural Students’
Relationship in an International Higher
Education Institution Residential
Set-Up: A Case Study**

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Abstract. *International educational institutions are customarily flocked by multicultural students who end up staying together in the same residential area. Higher education institutions in the Philippines are no exception to the influx of multicultural students. Perceptions of challenges in multicultural students’ residential areas differ based on students’ cultures. Yet, the host schools need to cater to such differences. The social identity theory categorizes these statuses as “contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo independence, immersion-emersion, and autonomy.” This case study seeks to examine the multicultural relations of international students residing at a private institution campus using a focus group and individual interviews focusing on the status. Research respondents are student residents. Findings showed the pros and cons of multicultural human relations. The study concludes with recommendations for a better interpersonal, academic relationship in a multicultural set-up.*

Keywords: international educational institutions, Philippines, multicultural students, multicultural relations, case study

Introduction

Unity in diversity is the vision of many institutions and organizations leading to world peace. (Javan, 2017; Kochler, n.d.; Piedra, 2005). Especially, amid multicultural students residing in the closest vicinity of an international academic system, connections between them play a vital role in academic serenity (Alsubaie, 2015; Bhouraskar, 2020; Lauder, 2020; Lederman, 2020). However, community clusters and groups formed on the ethnic background could, at times, challenge the

tranquility of the students (Burden, Hodge, & Harrison, 2012; Navarro-Castro, & Nario-Galace, 2008). Such clusters and groups could create added challenges among multicultural students (Mittelmeier et al., 2017). Hence, there are pros and cons to multicultural connections. This study has purposely chosen this area to provide detailed guidelines that can lead to limiting the challenges of multicultural student connections in an academic, residential set-up.

Various educational units design activities to integrate cultural diversity; however, those genuine initiations that relate to the institutional policy are not completely embedded with the institutional culture (Lauder, 2020; Lederman, 2020). Most often, the student does not see the institution's priority for multicultural interaction and growth, which may guide the sensation of integration (Mittelmeier et al., 2017). Higher education institutions deal with integration of cultural diversity—to deal with international students fitting within the new or host culture (Burden et al., 2012). However, Berry's structural model of "mutual adjustment" shows that "integration is a process of mutual accommodation where the students and staff from the host culture have to be as open to engaging with difference and ultimately to change as the international students at that institution" (Popov et al., 2012, p. 18). Multicultural connections can be achieved through the commitment of the international students in integrating their identity value and endorse their increase in intercultural competence in an institution. This study attempts to answer the big question: What does residential set up provide for multicultural students' relationship with each other?

Review of the Literature

International students carry their values of learning, culture, and thinking results as issues of greatest concern in their host institution (Alavi & Mansor, as cited in Wu et al., 2015). Limited educational background, experience, skills, and language command paramount desperation among the group of students. This desperation leads to challenges in adapting to the new situation. Though the challenges are individual and they will be residing in their host institution, the residential set-up could relieve some of their challenges. The international students typically seek to have a transition bridge, which could ease their difficulty in the academic set-up. Berry (2010) suggested that the host institution should prepare their plan of accommodation well in a multicultural set-up.

Conversely, the students face challenges in terms of cultural and communication problems, academic challenges, language tolerance, lack of psychological, health, and social support, and recreational issues (Talebloo & Baki, 2013). These challenges may result in adverse results if the students are not provided with adjustment procedures. Further, in the absence of such guidance, students feel disappointed and unfulfilled. Hence, it is important to investigate the social interactions and the related issues of international residential students.

Social Interaction Theory and Social Identity Status

Helms et al. (2005) developed racial identity social interaction theory to explain the descriptive concepts about the interpersonal interactions based on race. In every society, the social status of an individual are defined by race or ethnicity, social role, representative populous, or any other defined characteristics. This delivers the levels of social power for the status. Interactions among different levels of social power could initiate altercations in the wielding of different levels of social power. This is the highlight of the model. Further, the three types of racial identity social interactions are progressive, regressive, and parallel, which contribute to different perspectives. The progressive interaction is between the individual with the most social power to the least in social power. This includes the sophistication of mediums used by the dominant group in responding to some racial events over the other. The regressive interaction happens when the individual responds immaturely to standards as perceived by the least social power group. The final aspect of interaction is the harmonious relationship between the highest and the lowest social power groups.

On the other hand, Helms et al. (2008) has recognized six social identity statuses, which are “contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo independence, immersion-Emersion, and autonomy” (p. 155). According to various studies (Glass & Westmont, 2014; Helms et al., 2008; Shaules, 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009), the six social identity statuses are defined as follows: (a) contact—a lack of self-awareness with respect to one’s own status; (b) disintegration—confusion about being part of one particular racial group; (c) reintegration—psychological and physical separation from oneself; (d) pseudo-independence—intellectualized understanding of one’s privilege and considering oneself as a beneficiary of it; (e) Immersion-Emersion—avoiding the benefits of being part of a dominant racial group and replacing people with similar conscious ones; and (f) autonomy—recognizing forms of oppression and attempting to eradicate them. These statuses play a succinct role in an inter-racial and multicultural society.

Ethnic Self-identification

Every individual agrees on their cultural identity by the way they perceive it. At times, it differs among the individual from the same cultural or ethnic group. However, certain domains measures are considered by the individual to deem their ethnic self-identity (Glass & Westmont, 2014; Helms et al., 2008; Shaules, 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). The four major domains through which the self-ethnic identity can be measured are natal, behavioral, subject, and situation context measures. However, these four areas measure remain a challenge to identify in a multicultural set-up.

Acculturation and Enculturation

In a multicultural society, acculturation is an automated process (Berry, 2010). Though acculturation propensities the change, friction develops among individuals or groups of individuals at different levels. According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation is a phenomenon that occurs “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” (p. 149). On the other hand, acculturation is identified as “the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, institutions) by persons, groups or classes of a given culture” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p. 18). Berry (2010) argues that Spencer and Franklin have ignored some critical elements such as resistance or rejection of foreign cultural elements. Also, the distinctive knowledge about acculturation and enculturation would further add essence to the approach of this review.

Enculturation is a process of an individual’s socialization that helps him/her to adapt or to acquire social norms, values, behaviors, language, and other mediums of the culture that surrounds the individual (Shimahara, 1970). The individual may sometimes go through this process with the help of parents, peers, and siblings. This help is rendered to the individual to help them fit into society. Further, this adjustment is made to be accepted in a society based on the set standards (Barry et al., 1995). However, acculturation is a phenomenon that explains the individual’s role in socialization with different cultures (Berry, 2010; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Socialization is identified with both cultural and psychological elements. The significant changes observed in this process are both visible and invisible. Though the changes are of two types, the consequential changes are seen among both the cultural groups.

Cultural Shock Theory

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (as cited in Talebloo & Baki, 2013) and Oberg (as cited in Talebloo & Baki, 2013) define culture shock as a condition precipitated by the anxiety that may have caused by losing one’s familiarity with the own culture. Further, the experiences of people who transfer overseas for various reasons can cause challenges in one’s life to the extent of being affected both physically and psychologically by this culture shock. Some of the important aspects of considering this cultural shock theory are as follows: (a) strain caused by the adaptation effort, (b) sense of deprivation, (c) rejected or rejecting new culture, (d) self-identity confusion, (e) psychological challenges over cultural differences, and (f) impotency feeling. These conditions lead individuals to advance into the deterioration of physical and mental health in a multi-cultural set-up. Further, it promotes extreme cultural sensitivity or insensitivity at a community level.

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett's developmental model primarily focuses on cultural integration at a community level (Berry, 2013). This model has two basic dimensions of approach in which it focuses on the self and its relationship with the other. Further, he proposed four elements depending on the preference of intercultural sensitivity. They are integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. This theory highly emphasizes integration through contact, participation, and personal resilience. However, the model suggests that the students or individuals in a foreign land may have to undergo intercultural sensitivity before attaining help from the host institution or society.

Responsibilities of Universities

Every institution should consider the integration of students through mutual adjustment both in community and individual levels (Berry, 2013). The institutions are responsible to cater to maintain one's heritage culture and adjust according to the student's needs (Berry, 2013; Glass & Westmont, 2014). According to the student affairs research and assessment (2012), the seniors of the institution had a serious conversation with the others in the institution and the residence. NSSE (2012) research indicates that 55% of the seniors had a conversation with the other cultural groups. However, this does not facilitate any specific details about the arrangement of students in any specific order in the residential set-up.

Residence Life and Academic Performance

Arthaud-Day et al. (2005) mention that life satisfaction plays a major role in student performance. In an institutional set-up, the external life satisfaction can be offered by the conditions of the residential set-up. Some of the conditions suggested by Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy for a living-learning environment also incorporate the values of the importance of residential set-up in a multicultural context (Zeller, 2008). Here are some of the suggestions: (a) create safe, healthy, and nurturing living-learning communities; (b) provide learning experiences that foster on-going leadership development and application of life skills; (c) assist students in identifying their developmental and ethical awareness needs; (d) setting goals with action plans and monitoring their growth in each of these areas; (e) encourage students to progress through their development at a personal pace that is congruent with their background and culture, and the events taking place in their lives; (f) design, implement, and evaluate performance assessment tasks that provide feedback on individual student progress toward the residential life learning standards and the student's personal goals; (g) encourage students to build and maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults in a climate of mutual respect and trust; (h) demonstrate, by words, actions, and examples, progress with ethical decision-making and personal development

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(Torres, 2014; Zeller, 2008). These are in-focus for the children of the parents from multi-culture residing together.

Though there is immense literature available on multicultural adaptation and academic performance based on external factors, there is limited literature available on the design of residential set-up in the context of mixing students—placing students from different cultural background and different countries. Hence, it promoted this study to focus on the multicultural residential set-up, specifically in a higher learning institutional context. Consequently, this study propels the multicultural connection to the academic pursuit of the students. The following questions are considered for the study to initiate dynamic consideration in a multicultural residential set-up.

1. What are the advantages of multicultural residential set-up (MCRS)?
2. What are the disadvantages of multicultural residential set-up (MCRS)?
3. What are the recommendations for the institutions catering to multicultural students in residential set-up (MCRS)?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to identify the advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations. The findings would address the specific needs of the students representing different nations across the globe living together in a multicultural residential set-up of higher learning. Further, the study seeks to unravel the hidden values as recommendations for the institutions that play a vital role in the residential life of students.

Methodology

This part presents the methodology that is employed in this study, which includes research design, sampling procedures, research instrumentation, and data collection process. This study used case study as the research design. Other details are also explained in the following paragraphs. In the end, the ethical principles involved in the study are discussed.

Research Design

The theoretical approach of this study is informed primarily by Berry's structural model of mutual adjustment (Mulder et al., 2012). The theory basically directs and builds the case within its boundary. The participants' views are significant in this study as it dictates the reality from the social milieu. This signifies the credibility of the case from the eyes of the participant; hence, it is a case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Merriam (2009), case study is defined as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40). Additionally, Yin (2014) states that it has to be done in a contemporary, real-life

context. Meanwhile, Creswell and Poth (2018) outline the features of a case study as the following: (a) identification of the case; (b) definition of a bounded system; (c) intention of the study as case as a key instrument—for understanding; (d) presentation of the in-depth view of the case; (e) selection of single case or multiple case study; (f) generation of themes for the case; and (g) lessons learned from the study (Gaikwad & Obaya, 2018). In this study, the case is a single case where the intent is to provide a deeper understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of multicultural living set-up. The research questions are in line with the intent of the study.

Research Setting and Sampling

In this case study research, the multicultural student's residence set-up is the case, a system of student accommodation in an IHEI. The bounded system included the schools of learning (departments), programs offered by them, teachers, students, and dependents who don't attend the school. The school assigns students for their residence or accommodation depending on their financial status and the need of the family; however, the choices are not open, and it always goes by the decision of the Housing committee. By preference, students of the same cultural background are not assigned in the same tower. During the initial stages, for some, it takes a year or two; but for some, even till they return, they have cultural shock even in their residential areas in line with the living style. Therefore, these students are considered for the study with their data. This study took into account some of the different countries represented by students in an International Higher Educational Institution (IHEI), in the Philippines. The purposive sampling procedure was to be used to obtain a representative sample of a country present in each student tower of IHEI. The selection criteria were the following: (a) need to be a graduate student, (b) from a different country than another participant, (c) need to have stayed on the campus for at least one year from the time of their arrival, (d) need to understand the research concern or issue and express in English to give data. The total number of participants includes 8 males and 7 females from 15 different countries after some of them dropped off during the consent procedure.

Participants

The primary goal of the study is to identify the advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations which concern international students in their new environment, to be specific in the multicultural set-up. The participants of this study were students of the international higher education institution in the Philippines. Mostly, these are married students staying with their families. Further, this is an international institution. Therefore, the students and their families came with unique cultural backgrounds. However, the institution had students from more than 50 countries. The process of purposive sampling resulted in a large pool of participants; however, consent for the study was given by only a limited number of

them. Finally, 15 participants representing different countries completed their data contribution through interviews. Both male and female participants contributed to this study and were 8 and 7, respectively.

Instrumentation

The interview questionnaire was constructed by following the steps as guided by the research questions. Further, the questions designed were followed up by designing new questions and also by adapting some of the questions raised from recommendations of previous research. Additionally, five specific questions were used for focus group discussion. Periodic observations were made and recorded based on the issues witnessed related to the case.

Data Collection Procedures

At the onset, approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Board and the gatekeepers of the institution. A consent letter was given to the representatives of each tower at the IHEI campus. After obtaining the consent, individual in-depth interview was conducted on each participant, followed by a focus group discussion, and observations were made.

To elaborate on the data collection procedure, the procedures are explained as follows. The purpose of the study was discussed with the gatekeepers of the IHEI, and the accommodation details were procured from the same. Upon getting the details, the purposive samples were identified after checking with the selection criteria. Then, these prospective participants were approached for their consent. It was not an easy task as it took time for an appointment, and further appointments were made. Few shunned away from their participation. However, some were interested to see the results of the study and consented to participate. In the process, a few dropped out, and it became a matter of concern for the researcher. Individual Interviews were conducted at different timings according to the availability of the participants. Only one focus group discussion was used as the participants were not available at the same time. Periodic observations were made by visiting the apartment towers and also through the reports gathered from the Student services offices about types of concerns expressed from the student side. Eventually, enough data was obtained to reach the saturation point.

The data's credibility is vouched by the triangulation of the data, as mentioned, followed by the design process as cited before in the table. Further, dependability was assured by the consistency of the processing of the data. According to O'reilly and Kiyimba'a (2015), the reader must value the soundness of the study's argument to establish transferability. Confirmability points out the data subjectivity of the participants towards the case investigated (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This explains the rigor of the study in the data collection procedure of this study.

Data Analysis

For data analysis of this study, Robert Yin's framework was used where five dominant techniques for data analysis were used. Here, the data collected was decoded after transcribing the interview and focus group discussion audio records. To be more precise, triangulation of findings was possible through data acquired through multiple sources (Observation, Interviews, and Focus Group—see Table 1). The codes used were attribute, in vivo, and values to identify the in-depth attribute of the data in reflection to the case (Saldana, 2009, p. 204). In addition, color coding was done to separate the approach of data analysis. Further, theming the data were logically flowing as they were categorized in line and on par with the research questions and the emerging data. Eventually, themes and trends were derived from the data using the qualitative coding method.

Table 1

Triangulation Matrix for Data Collection

S.No.	Research Questions	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3
1	Advantages of MCRS	Observation	FGD	Interview
2	Disadvantages of MCRS	Observation	FGD	Interview
3	Recommendations for MCRS	Observation	FGD	Interview

Ethical Considerations

Actions were taken to ensure that this study followed ethical considerations. The ethical review board of our institution endorsed the study. Along with the ethical considerations of Creswell and Poth (2018), several other procedures helped in ethically conducting the study, such as (a) the participants responding to an informed consent form at the beginning of the study to indicate their willingness to be part of the study and giving permission to audio record the interviews, (b) explaining to the participants that the data will be treated confidentially and be used only with the research context and in no other form, (c) the use of pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants will not experience any physical or mental discomfort or harm arising from the study, and (d) giving back the results of the study in written form to them. All these ethical issues were addressed in this study. In addition, the framework specifically guided to attend the ethical issues that are concerned from (a) prior to conducting a study, (b) beginning to conduct the study, (c) collecting data, (d) analyzing data, (e) reporting data, and (f) publishing the study.

Researcher's Reflexivity

I, as a Christian researcher and a graduate student of this Christian institution, believe that a residential place plays an important role in the life of a graduate school student, especially when the students come from different parts of the world. Though I have my own beliefs and values about cultural values in a residential set-up (being a third culture kid—exposed to multicultural settings, almost my entire life was a learning experience in adjusting to life without complaining, and to be content with what one has—including place of stay), the participants were treated without any bias.

Findings

A case study on the residential set-up in a higher learning institution has brought up consciousness to some of the trending issues in international higher learning institutions. The research questions framed at the beginning of the study guided in gathering pertinent data; data was classified further based on analysis into themes and trends. Several themes were identified that appropriately fit under each research question. These themes are arranged and explained according to the research questions as it addresses the study purpose. The research questions addressed in this study are (a) What are the advantages of multicultural residential set-up (MCRS)? (b) What are the disadvantages of multicultural residential set-up (MCRS)? (c) What are the recommendations for the institutions catering to multicultural students in residential set-up (MCRS)?

Advantages of Multicultural Residential Set-Up

The first research question addresses the advantages of multicultural students in a residential set-up (MCRS). Based on the data analysis, the following themes were derived for this question. Further, each theme is supported by quotes from the data—specifically from Interviews (I), focus group discussion (FGD), and Observations (OBS).

Theme 1: Benevolence. Irrespective of the neighbor's country of origin, the respondents felt that the benevolence shown by the multicultural neighborhood is overwhelming. However, certain factors, which include personality and language deficiency (among others) have interrupted the fellowship. On the other hand, 65% felt that there are no such altercations among the residential members due to their country of origin. The participants, when asked about the benevolence and altercations, had many things to say. Thomas (Pseudonym) said there is "*no quarrel among the residents (OBS, p.1)*", while John said, "*We adjust with each other (FGD, p.2)*". This idea was voted by many and one said enthusiastically that "*I have no problem with lots of adjustment (I, p. 3)*." UNESCO Office Bangkok and National Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific (2004) suggests that "it

is critical to sensitize teachers and education administrators about the importance of inclusive education” (p. 3). This type of adjustment comes from all around.

Theme 2: Academic staff support. Teachers play the role of connecting the gap of the students existing externally by mending it internally in the classroom. However, 60% of the respondents felt that the academic staff, inclusive of teachers had played a negative role in integrating the students from different cultural backgrounds. This was due to some of the respondent’s personal experience as well as the experience of their classmates from a different country of origin. This feeling was expressed by 45% male and 15% female respondents. *Teachers help in differences* (OBS, p. 2). *Sometimes, our teachers help in coming together even though we may exhibit differences* (FGD, p. 3). *Teachers are always of good support. They go beyond classroom issues* (I, p. 2). “Some teachers, administrators, and parents view their schools’ increasing diversity as a problem rather than an opportunity” (p. 16). Many education leaders in diversity-enhanced schools are moving beyond blame and befuddlement and working to transform themselves and their schools to serve all their students well. Further, A good school maximizes the learning experiences of students (Banks et al., 2001). “From observing and collaborating with them, I have learned that this transformative work proceeds best in five phases: (1) building trust, (2) engaging personal culture, (3) confronting issues of social dominance and social justice, (4) transforming instructional practices, and (5) engaging the entire school community” (Howard, 2007, p. 16).

Theme 3: Student services. Both the male and the female respondents were quite positive about the services they receive from the student services; however, they claim to have differences in other institutions of higher learning. The assimilation of services catering to the adaptation is overwhelming, as it does not include the host nation. This further set the delimitation of the study conducted. On the other hand, financial services were anytime a threat in terms of residential services; however, it does not play differences based on nationality. This could be understood from the direct quotes of the participants of the study. Thomas said that the student services “*provides guidance and support*” (OBS, p. 3). Further, “*Allocates housing accordingly*” (FGD, p. 2). The services vouched in saying, “*We know the best for our students*” (I, p. 1). Student services should be serving impartially, and should not exist to advocate their own agendas. Instead, they should provide inclusive facilities and resources to students—those of different backgrounds and religious beliefs” (Cunningham, 2006). Further, the student services could develop “*hope and know that hoping is a commitment to finding new and better directions;*” “*engage with those whose views differ from ours and know that meaningful engagement requires slowing down and listening;*” and “*care enough to challenge one another and know that challenging is a way to practice the values we profess.*” With hope in our hearts and a commitment to engaging with differing points of view, we are then prepared to challenge ideas and actions that confound, trouble, or upset us” (Kinsey, 2017, para. 5, 7, 9). The

emerging trends which surfaced out of this case study are grouped under the following areas:

Theme 4: Student personality. Every individual has a unique personality, which results in different perceptions towards acculturation. The personality does contribute to the residential set-up by on extreme levels of sociability. Higher the differences, it was perceived as a personality difference than the cultural difference. Quotes from the data show that *the differences are not expressed outwardly* (OBS, p.1). *I learned to adjust and learn from each other* (I, p. 1). Individual-level effects concern such outcomes as the psychological relationship between the individual and the group as reflected in-group identification and commitment (Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui et al., as cited in Knippenberg et al., 2007). Further, the beauty of people is their diversity of thought, of personality, of culture. We need every member of the human family to create a prosperous and productive society (Harper, 2018).

Theme 5: Institutional students' purpose. The purpose of every international student is to learn and to experience in a multicultural environment, hence have no say about the differences they face. The international students have also an expectation of a multi-cultural set-up before coming to a place where it is an international set-up. Further, the respondents have learned to have a paradigm shift in learning additional values from a host of diverse cultures. However, this was adapted in line with their cultural values. The data says *I believe I am here to experience new living styles* (FGD, p. 2). *The main purpose of our stay defeats the differences* (I, p. 3). The different diversities are united with one goal: providing quality education for the benefit of the students who need their developmental needs in the higher education Institution (Chan & Choy, 2010). Further, purposeful harmony is expressed in coordinated and co-operative actions. Emotional accord grows out of strong interpersonal relationships among organizational members (Klagge, 1995).

Theme 6: Community integrity programs. The number of programs organized both spiritually and socially had uplifted the community orientation. However, some of the respondents felt the need for limitation for such programs. The explanation, for this reason, is that it could result in the marginalization of minorities. *All communities come together and take away the differences* (OBS, p. 3). *Community leaders and members help us get to learn new nuances of living* (FGD, p. 4). *Sometimes my community members help me understand my doubts and misgivings* (I, p. 2). This uniqueness, richness, and diversity have become the cornerstone for the country's success in managing ethnic relations by placing importance on tolerance, positive virtues, and cooperation (Gill et al, 2012). In addition, the process towards rapprochement, towards reclaiming the ancient unity between these families, can lead to a broader reflection on the well-worn but hugely important concept of "Unity in Diversity" (Bouteneff, 2010).

Disadvantages of Multicultural Residential Set-Up

The second research question addresses the disadvantages of multicultural students in a residential set-up (MCRS). Based on the data analysis, the following themes were derived for this question.

Theme 1: Culture shock. Culture shock did emerge as a theme not in the pursuance of its vigor; however, as a matter of learning arena beyond the respondent's cultural identity. Especially in recognition of the residential set-up, the bonding has surpassed the shock. Though the responses were overwhelming in this theme, 35% of the respondents were still undergoing psychological challenges. *"Hardly open the door"* (OBS, p. 3). *"There are many new things that we are still digesting. . ."* (FGD, p. 3). *"Everything seems to be new at the beginning"* (I, p. 4). It is not a bad thing to disagree with another person's cultural norms and behaviors. In fact, it is normal to dislike things about other people. However, it is more important that you are aware of your feelings and that you make sure that these feelings do not come in the way of your work (Refugee one, n.d.)

Theme 2: Language deficiency. The majority of the respondents whose native language is not English, which is the medium of instruction and the standards of higher learning, face challenges in a multicultural residential set-up. Though at times, the optimistic approach or benevolence of the neighbors exalt the esteem of such students. However, language becomes a schema to determine the social power of the individual in this context. Hence, challenges exist. *"communication is rare"* (OBS, p. 3). *"Some do not have the complete background of English—they suffer"* (FGD, p. 2). *"I am afraid; sometimes I use an action to communicate with my neighbor"* (I, p. 3). An explicit formal conception of human language that embraces both considerable diversity and underlying biological unity is possible (Fitch, 2011). However, trends combined with economic distress have brought tension about culture and language difference to the forefront of debate at every level (Pearson, n.d.).

Theme 3: Spiritual identity. The majority of the respondents expressed integration based on spirituality; however, the differences came into force in the pattern of worship. The data highlights that various elements of worship still could be the same irrespective of the difference in cultural patterns. Hence, it propagates integration among the multicultural students in their residential place. *"As Seventh-day Adventists, we adjust among ourselves"* (FGD, p. 3). *Sometimes we are ashamed of our differences being on the same campus* (I, p. 2). The process of identity formation is extremely complex and varies depending on time and space. Identities can be overlapping, and individuals may have several identities. Here, it is based on religion (Johnsson, 2010).

Theme 4: Programs that divide. At times, the programs, both academic and social, create friction from different communities. Based on the type of program, level of student status, language proficiency, and culture dominance, the participation differs among the social group. Consequently, the high social power

group participates and enjoys the program, whereas the other does not participate. *The master's students are looked down upon by some of the Ph.D. Students* (FGD, p. 5). *Sometimes, there is a feeling of inferiority based on the program.* There is no doubt that higher education (HE) has entered an era of change. It is widely believed that international students require special attention and support (Grinkevich & Shabanova, 2017).

Theme 5: Predestined attention. The academic staff, inclusive of teachers, are highly prone to pre-determining individuals' standards of performance from a certain cultural background. Though this is sometimes advantageous for some from a specific region, it turns out to be embarrassing for some. *"There are biased expectations of faculty from the students* (OBS, p. 3). *I am not ashamed of where I am from, but some teachers are.* They have widely differing views about many other aspects of their faith, including how important religion is to their lives (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Recommendations for Multicultural Residential Students

The third research question addresses the recommendations for multicultural students in a residential set-up (MCRS). Based on the data analysis, the following themes were derived for this question.

Theme 1: Cultural identity and value. The cultural identity and value of any international student are highly significant as they spend a limited period over here in this place. The respondents seek to safeguard their values as their children are quite prone to adapt quicker than adults. In the process, friction plays a challenge in establishing their values. Though it trends toward the third culture pattern, 80% of the respondents foster their children towards their cultural value as well as themselves by seeking the assistance of community-based programs and social media. *"Teach children to learn their own cultural values"* (OBS, p. 5). *"Though we live together, one day we will be back home—our values are important"* (FGD, p. 2). It has been frequently pointed out that the variety and diversity of cultures establish the identity and value (Clarke, 1970).

Theme 2: Differentiated instruction. The respondents expressed that differentiated instruction initiated by some teachers handled their academic anxiety well. Though they are from a different academic background, not necessarily in the language perspective; but the level of knowledge orientation differs according to the previous place of study. Consequently, the adaptation to a new academic system is possible only if the teachers can accommodate for differences in the learning process. However, some respondents felt that there is still a need for differentiated instruction in some areas. *Academic anxiety was handled well by the teachers* (OBS, p. 2). *Academic anxiety was handled well by the teachers* (OBS, p. 2). According to Tomlinson (2017), the unit of focus is the group as a whole. In those places, to differ from the norm in any significant way is to be an

inconvenience—a stressor on the system. One of the two “solutions” is commonly applied.

Discussion

The multicultural residential set-up study has revealed the pros (advantages) and the cons (disadvantages) of students living together in an IHEI, in the Philippines. The proposed advantages of residential set-up, from the study, are (a) adapting to the new environment by a student is well-supported by the neighbors from the same tower, (b) comforting those with home-sickness by expressing their own situation with each other, (c) preparing the individuals to participate without any cultural distinction, (d) encouraging stages of an ethno-relative concept like acceptance, adaptation, and integration, (e) help through programs designed by the institution for the residents of student towers to come together, (f) reducing prejudice as the student perceives multi-culturally, (g) staying together to develop one's personality especially to have empathy to other people, (h) adding more value to residential set-up to sustain oneself academically, (i) providing friendship and a sense of belongingness, (j) building resilience to various challenges among the students in this set-up, and (k) handling possible challenges which could be created by groups in residential set-up or residences from various communities.

On the other hand, the proposed disadvantages from the study are rectifiable and constructive pointers that would guide and help both the students as well as the administration. They are (a) different cultural practices and reactions to such differences could create friction among them, (b) coping mechanisms are challenged when prejudice is seen over the services offered to a specific community based on their social power and relations, (c) discrimination over language proficiency is one of the greatest disadvantages, (d) grouping based on community or race creates divide division among the individuals in a tower, (e) when the students are placed in towers with other students from different cultures without any orientation, (f) certain elements of specific culture remain intolerable to some individuals, (g) differences are experienced based on the racial background, (h) at times, there was zero tolerance from some community over others, (i) loneliness initially as the neighbors did not visit them, (j) privacy is defined with the avoidance of certain individuals in a community, and (k) certain community representatives are at times marginalized based on their origin, economic status, and other concerns.

Based on the advantages and the disadvantages discussed earlier, these are the proposed recommendations to make this IHEI more comfortable and conducive for students to stay and live. They are (a) seminars should be arranged often for a better adaptation process. Ethnocentric and ethno-relative stages should be dealt with during such seminars; (b) orientation program requires a step-up procedure; (c) there should be intra and inter multicultural interaction among the residential community; (d) the houses in each tower should be allotted exclusively for people

from different communities; (e) too much westernization should be avoided in a higher education institution situated in Asia; (f) faculty from the developing countries should be given equal importance and share in dealing with the Asian students; (g) higher learning institutions in the developing countries should provide an ambiance where the West and the East meet together; (h) differentiated instruction should be provided for students based on their background; (i) the teachers and students should be given consistent training on the multicultural theories and educational implications; (j) the multicultural visitation or get together should be encouraged often; and (k) more opportunities and services should be provided for the new international students to settle and adapt to the new environment.

The study conducted in this context provides a greater knowledge pool for the student services department, administration of IHEI, faculty, and staff, Teachers and student leaders, etc. Hence, the implication of this study is highly appreciated among the leadership. However, there were limitations to this study as the study was initially done for a conference presentation and it was done with a limited time; some of the potential participants were busy who could have given added insights to the study. A study is recommended to identify many more intrinsic and extraneous factors through a longitudinal in-depth study. A quantitative study also could be done in a similar context.

Conclusion

This case study unraveled the questions framed at the beginning of the study and achieved the answers. The questions regarding the advantages, disadvantages of multicultural residential set-up and recommendations for improving the conditions were listed as discussed well. The case study highlighted its purpose, exploration of the main idea, methodological rigor, an analytical framework to understand the philosophical paradigm behind the study, and its presentation. The proposed four elements, depending on the preference of intercultural sensitivity, were integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. This study ascertained those ingredients through contact, participation, and personal resilience. However, this study suggests that the students or individuals in a foreign land may not undergo intercultural sensitivity before attaining help from the host institution or society. The results could be applied in a limited way where participants are found in similar contexts.

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