



The Outcomes of Thai Pharmacy University Students Participating in the Student Exchange Program

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Abstract

This study determined to discover the outcomes that Thai undergraduate pharmacy students gained from participating in the student exchange program. The population in this study contained of 71 Mahidol University undergraduate pharmacy students who participated in the 2014 student exchange program in six host universities in four ASEAN countries for 28 days of the exchange. The research instrument employed in this study was a questionnaire consisting of twenty-seven closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. Furthermore, by using purposive sampling method, semi-structured interviews with six students were also applied to receive in-depth information. SPSS was utilized to analyze quantitative data, and a content analysis was used for qualitative data. The findings revealed that the outcome that the students gained most from participating in the exchange program was in the aspect of social development and culture, followed by personal development, academics and language, and career and higher education, respectively. This study on the outcomes obtained from participating in the student exchange program could be beneficial to the related pharmacy institutions in exploring the value of further developing their student exchange programs and collaborative coordinating as well as designing well-equipped and productive student exchange programs.

Keywords: Outcomes, pharmacy students, Thai university students, the Student Exchange Program

Introduction

Higher education with the aim of fostering students' academic performance and enhancing their entire capabilities to peacefully live and work in this globally interconnected century and multi-cultural environment has been considerably challenged by globalization. According to Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2014), the students have been required to master multi-dimensional or integrated skills including a combination of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies for successful living in the 21st century. Furthermore, cultural competence has been vital for professional practice in this diverse environment as a result of international integration. In order to nurture these essential competences and skills, various strategies have been promoted in internationalizing higher education including jointed education, research collaboration, and exchange programs (Doyle et al., 2010).



Student exchange programs have been widely recognized as one of the most effective programs normally hosted by educational institutions to strengthen participating students' potential to be more competent in this competitive economy and society (Daly & Barker, 2010). The contributions of student exchange programs have been acknowledged including consolidating international and intercultural separation, promoting tolerance and secure peace, elevating mutual understanding among the nations, enriching professional knowledge and skills, augmenting integrated perspectives, building transitional collaboration and networking, and also enhancing cultural sensitivity (Guest, Livette & Stone, 2006; Cowan, 2007; Sassenberg & Matschke, 2010; Baernholdt et al., 2013).

Also, it has been considered an effective mechanism of transmitting and sharing knowledge and ideas across cultures. At the end of such exchange programs, participating students are basically expected to recognize an understanding among the nations, raising intercultural sensitivity and integrated perspectives, improving personal competency and some matured character skills such as leadership, independent decision-making skills, adaptation skills, self-confidence, and networking life-long friendships. Besides, they should also have a familiarity and understanding of differentiation of other cultures and individual respect (Frisch, 1990; Cowan, 2007; Sassenberg & Matschke, 2010).

Apart from the contribution to participating students, student exchange programs seem to benefit in-charge universities concerning mutual agreement and trustworthy relationships, resulting in enabling these universities and partners to get involved in internationalization which means to become more internationalized and globalized in both physical settings and learning environment. Student exchange program would be considered one of distinguished outreach learning activity in internationalization in developing pharmacy students' performance in Mahidol University as well as providing them with internationally diverse experience.

Literature Review

The Student Exchange Program, Faculty of Pharmacy, Mahidol University

Mahidol University has accommodated more than 2,000 inbound and outbound international students at all faculties (Mahidol University, International Relations Division, 2015). These figures have apparently confirmed Mahidol University's effort concerning internationalization in order to provide international experience to Mahidol students and academic staff as well as to accept foreign students and academicians for educational purposes and visits which would last for fruitful and sustainable collaboration and internationalization.

As committed to the university's internationalization policy, Faculty of Pharmacy, Mahidol University has continually increased international involvement and perspective as well as expanded international collaboration with overseas pharmacy schools and professional partners. Furthermore, the faculty has arranged its own student exchange program for undergraduate pharmacy students with a desire of providing undergraduate pharmacy students an international perspective in diverse disciplines, broadening their professional knowledge and global experience, developing their social skills and essential characteristics, and preparing them for future intercultural working atmosphere by promoting pharmacy professional practices in international settings.



In 2013, the first batch of eight undergraduate pharmacy students for the student exchange program was initiated in collaboration with Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Then, the second batch of the student exchange program was launched by participation of 71 undergraduate pharmacy students in 2014. The students were abroad at six host universities in four ASEAN countries including Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Surabaya in Indonesia; Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and School of Pharmacy, Taylor's University in Malaysia; University of Medicine & Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi University of Pharmacy in Vietnam, and Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines, for 28 days of the exchange.

The students had an opportunity to participate in several learning environments including in-class lectures in pharmacy-related courses, pharmaceutical laboratories, pharmacy professional practices, and outreach activities with local pharmacy students. In addition, most of the participating students who joined the 2014 exchange program were granted financial support from Mahidol University as the university offered short-term exchange scholarships to those who were qualified for this fund. After returning to their home university, the students participating in the program were required to conduct debriefing session and exit presentation to their non-exchanged students with the aim of sharing their experience. With this requirement, the students would have a chance to enhance their perspective and integrated skills as a result of participating in the exchange to gradually become more global citizens.

Prior research about the Student Exchange Program

The student exchange program has been a widespread attractive academic excursion among interested students with high effort to promote internationalization to higher education as well as to enhance multinationalization in providing one country's academic program abroad (Altbach, 2005 as cited in Wang and Beasley, 2014, p. 47). Normally, the exchange program offers an opportunity to participating students to be involved in one's academic and cultural differences for a specific period of time. Studying, living, and having interaction with native speakers in different situations tend to become more attractive challenges for prospective students in terms of language and cultural competency, and self-development (Watson & Wolfel, 2015).

A number of empirical studies on student exchange programs and study abroad experience have attempted to support and extend several areas of values in the field of international education. For instance, Shieh (2004), Chi (2013), and Cowie (2013) concluded in their research studies that personal and professional development could be nurtured throughout the exchange program. In terms of academic aspect, Son and Park (2014) revealed that different academic approach and atmosphere could be experienced as well. Similarly, Doyle et al. (2010) revealed that participants could have a chance to enroll in the course that was not available in home university. Furthermore, several studies have confirmed the dominant contributions of exchange programs including a means of increasing cultural sensitivity and awareness, social skill development, understanding and respect of individual's differences of culture and ways of thinking, intercultural education and interaction, foreign language acquisition, and global awareness and engagement (Dedee & Stewart, 2003; Guest, Livette, & Stone, 2006; Doyle et al., (2010); Aydin, 2012; Boateng & Thompson, 2013; Kurt, Olitsky, & Geis



2013; Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi & Magnan, 2014). In addition, the study of Parsons (2010) revealed numerous outcomes of study abroad program, e.g., foreign language acquisition; intercultural sensitivity; a decrease in xenophobia; intercultural communication skills; increase of self-awareness and concern about cross-culture, international affairs, understanding of differences among nations, and ways of life; and increase of cultural knowledge of the host country.

Methodology

The study of the outcomes of Thai pharmacy university students participating in the exchange program is a quantitative and qualitative study. The objective is to discover the outcomes that undergraduate pharmacy students gained from the student exchange program. The questionnaire and interview method were employed in this study.

Population

By using a purposive sampling method, this study was carried out with 71 Mahidol University undergraduate pharmacy students as the questionnaire respondents. All of them were the participating students taking part in the 2014 student exchange program in six host universities in four ASEAN countries for approximately 28 days of the exchange. Likewise, six student leaders from six host universities were purposively selected for the interviews as they were the key informants of each host.

Research Instrument

This research study comprised two research instruments. The first instrument was a self-administered questionnaire, which was partly adopted and adapted from the study of Dirks (2010) and Aydin (2012), containing of 27 items of close-ended questions with 5-Likert scale format and one open-ended question for collecting data from 71 respondents. The close-ended questions were categorized into four aspects including 1) Academic and language aspect, 2) Personal development aspect, 3) Social and cultural aspect, and 4) Career and higher education aspect. Before distributing the questionnaires to the respondents, a pilot study with similar population, eight participants in the 2013 student exchange program, was performed in order to verify that the questionnaire was understandable and effective for data collection. After receiving eight returned questionnaires, the validity of the questionnaire content was then analyzed by using the coefficient formula of Cronbach's Alpha correlation. The validity score revealed Cronbach's Alpha of testing 27 questions equaled 0.970. In addition, semi-structured interviews with six leader students, one from each destination, as the second instrument, were employed for eliciting qualitative data with the purpose of triangulating and supporting the quantitative findings. The purposive sampling method enabled the author to select six leader students as they were the key informants of each host university who were involved and rich in related information and experience (Creswell, 1998).

Procedure

Since this study was quantitative and qualitative research, the data collection was separated into two rounds upon research instruments. First, the questionnaires were directly distributed to 71 respondents by the researcher at Mahidol University Pharmacy



Faculty. After receiving 71 completed questionnaires, later, the researcher personally made an appointment with six interviewees at their convenience after their classes at Mahidol University Pharmacy Faculty to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews took approximately 15-20 minutes to finish. A guideline containing interview sequence and questions for the semi-structured interview was prepared and used to facilitate these interviews. The interview questions mostly focused on beneficial outcomes of the exchange program participation.

When the data collection was completed, the Statistical Package for Social and Science (SPSS) program was utilized to analyze the collected quantitative data by using descriptive statistics (e.g., Frequency, Mean score, and Standard Deviation). In terms of the criteria and the interpretation of attitude level, the Mean Score with the range of 4.21-5.00 was interpreted as a very high level, 3.41-4.20 was in a high level, 2.61-3.40 was in a moderate level, 1.81-2.60 was in a low level, and 1.00-1.80 was in very low level. Also, the content analysis was applied for qualitative data from open-ended question and interview responses.

Findings

Questionnaire Responses

Table 1. Respondents' attitude concerning gained outcomes of academic and language aspect

Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
4	I had a chance to experience in different learning environment.	4.69	0.55	1	Very high
2	I had a chance to learn more about differences of pharmacy profession in other countries.	4.38	0.64	2	Very high
8	I obtained a chance to practice my English language in international settings.	4.32	0.69	3	Very high
3	I had a chance to learn more about advantages of pharmacy profession in other countries.	4.28	0.76	4	Very high
7	I enhanced my English proficiency.	4.23	0.81	5	Very high
9	I learned and practiced local language of host country.	4.00	0.91	6	High
6	I gained essential knowledge for study abroad.	3.77	0.91	7	High
5	I gained essential knowledge for higher education.	3.75	0.94	8	High
1	I gained knowledge and practical skill in pharmaceutical and related fields.	3.75	0.79	8	High
Total		4.13	0.78	-	High

As shown in Table 1, the overall mean score of the academic and language aspect was 4.13, which is considered a high level. The results depict that the top three most gained academic and language outcomes were experience in different learning environment (mean score = 4.69), followed by a chance to learn about differences of pharmacy profession in other countries (mean score = 4.38), and a chance to practice English language in international settings (mean score = 4.32). These top three outcomes are considered to be at a very high level.

Table 2. Respondents' attitude concerning gained outcomes of personal development aspect

Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
14	I was more adaptive and acquainted with different environment.	4.54	0.61	1	Very high
13	I developed my responsibility skill and was more dependable.	4.45	0.63	2	Very high
12	I developed problem solving skill and decision-making skill.	4.34	0.70	3	Very high
11	I was more matured, self-confident, and grown up.	4.28	0.64	4	Very high
10	I developed good leadership and followership skills.	4.10	0.70	5	High
Total		4.34	0.66	-	Very high

As indicated in Table 2, the overall mean score of personal development aspect is 4.34, which is considered a very high level. The results report that the top three most gained personal developments included being more adaptive and acquainted with different environment (mean score = 4.54), followed by developing responsibility skill and being more dependable (mean score = 4.45), and developing problem-solving skill and decision-making skill (mean score = 4.34). These top three outcomes are considered to be at a very high level.

Table 3. Respondents' attitude concerning gained outcomes of social and cultural aspect

Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
15	I had a chance to expand my perspective and increase overseas experiences.	4.55	0.53	1	Very high
16	I had a chance to learn culture, tradition, and life of other nations.	4.46	0.63	2	Very high
19	I met new friends and made friend with foreigners.	4.46	0.63	2	Very high



Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
20	I had a chance to learn the differences of other people and culture.	4.45	0.65	3	Very high
21	I had a chance to learn and live with other people peacefully.	4.45	0.63	3	Very high
17	I had a chance to be engaged in cultural exchange.	4.34	0.67	4	Very high
18	I had a chance to be acquainted with academic people in overseas pharmacy profession and established good relationship with foreigners.	4.18	0.68	5	High
Total		4.41	0.63	-	Very high

Table 3 illustrates the gained social and cultural outcomes. The overall mean score of social and cultural aspect is 4.41, which is considered a very high level. It indicates that the top three most gained outcomes in terms of social and cultural aspects include an increase of personal perspective and overseas experiences (mean score = 4.55), followed by an opportunity to learn culture, tradition, and life of other nations as well as a meeting and making friend with foreigners (mean score = 4.46), and a chance to learn the differences of other people and culture as well as living with other people peacefully (mean score = 4.45). These top three outcomes are considered to be at a very high level.

Table 4. Respondents' attitude concerning gained outcomes of career and higher education aspect

Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
26	I had a chance to gain academic experience in overseas educational institution.	3.93	0.82	1	High
27	I had a chance to seek opportunity to work overseas.	3.58	0.92	2	High
22	I extended a chance to enhance advantage of job application.	3.38	0.87	3	Moderate
25	I had a chance to enhance opportunity for job overseas.	3.37	0.97	4	Moderate
23	I extended a chance to earn more salary.	3.14	0.95	5	Moderate

Items	Outcomes	Mean	SD	Ranking	Interpretation
24	I extended a chance to be promoted to higher position.	3.10	0.99	6	Moderate
Total		3.42	0.92	-	High

Table 4 shows that the overall mean score of career and higher education aspect is 3.42, which is considered a high level. The top three outcomes which were obtained most in terms of career and higher education aspect include a chance to gain academic experience in overseas educational institution (mean score = 3.93), followed by seeking an opportunity to work overseas (mean score = 3.58), and a chance to enhance advantage of job application (mean score = 3.38). The first two outcomes are considered a high level of opinion, and the third outcome is considered a moderate level.

Table 5. Summary of outcomes in all aspects and rankings

Outcomes	\bar{X}	SD	Interpretation	Ranking
Social and Culture	4.41	0.63	Very high	1
Personal Development	4.34	0.66	Very high	2
Academic and Language	4.13	0.78	High	3
Career and Higher Education	3.42	0.92	High	4
Overall	4.08	0.75	High	-

Table 5 summarizes the gained outcomes which Thai pharmacy university students obtained from the participation in the 2014 student exchange program. The overall mean score of the outcomes is 4.08, which is considered a high level. The most gained outcome is in the social and cultural aspect (mean score = 4.41), followed by personal development aspect (mean score = 4.34), academic and language aspect (mean score = 4.13), and career and higher education aspect (mean score = 3.42), respectively. The mean score of the first and second outcomes are considered to be a very high level, whereas the mean score of the third and fourth aspects are considered a high level.

Open-ended Question and Interview Responses

Apart from close-ended questions, one open-ended question concerning gained outcomes and semi-structured interview with six students were conducted to receive additional ideas in order to acquire more related perspectives and support the data from the closed-ended questions. The content analysis technique was applied to analyze the qualitative data by grouping the similar meaning units for further description as summarized and simultaneously presented in the followings.



Relating to academic and language aspect, the responses of the open-ended question reported the most gained outcomes including pharmacy education and learning as well as English language and local language as the third language acquisition. Besides, the interview responses confirmed the quantitative findings. Some interviewees mentioned that they had a chance to be involved in pharmacy classes conducted with different teaching methods. Besides, one of the interviewees stated that there was another pharmacy-related class focusing on animal drugs offered in the host university in Malaysia. It was a new approach since this course has never been taught in the home university. Some excerpts are presented below.

1 "The first advantage was pharmacy learning and teaching method in Malaysia. Student-centered approach was employed in the learning and teaching method in host university. The students could share their idea with friends, discuss the topic among the groups, and participate in the activities. They were not also afraid of answering the questions even they were wrong answers, and their lecturers did not blame on the incorrect answers. Thus, I enjoyed the discussion and learning in the classroom."

2 "I also perceived differences of educational administration between Thailand and Malaysia that I could adapt new knowledge to my study such as veterinary drug course I learned there. We have never learned this course before in Thailand, and I think it has never been taught in pharmacy schools in Thailand. I think it was beneficial to me."

3 "I had a chance to learn not only English language, but also local language and Bahasa Indonesia language. I think it is quite similar to Thailand that they have several accents depending on their regions, resulting in having a chance to listen to several accents and local languages. Also, I met friends who came from Bali and Borneo Island, and they had different accents of languages and cultures. This absolutely increased my language skills."

Concerning personal development aspect, the responses gained from the open-ended question also showed the most gained outcomes including self-reliance, self-finance, leadership, responsibility, problem-solving skill, and adaptation skill. Additionally, the interview responses supported the quantitative findings. A few interviewees expressed that self-adaptation and maturity could be most developed throughout one-month exchange. Moreover, they reported that the ways of thinking and perspectives have also been observed throughout the difficult time while staying abroad. Some excerpts are displayed below.

1 "Totally, I realize I have been developed a lot. Self-adaptation and living abroad were the significant development; I eventually had a chance to truly adapt myself to suit this inconvenient situation such as eating and living in this city."

2 "I think there was a good thing beyond difficult time in life, and this could let me develop myself according to the exchange program."

Focusing on social and cultural aspect, the responses to the open-ended question and interview section also insisted that the most gained outcomes included making new Thai and foreign friends as well as establishing new relationships, being immersed in historical and cultural attractions, sharing individual's culture, and obtaining new perspectives and international experiences. Out of six interviews, two interviewees



expressed their changed attitude concerning religious aspects. These perhaps remarkably reflected gained outcomes of the exchange program focusing on elevating individual respect and differences as well as cultural sensitivity. Some excerpts are presented as follows:

1 "I had a chance to meet a lot of people who were Islamic people. They had different religious activities such as Muslim prayer, and I also experienced their living and daily life which were totally different from Thailand. We learned a lot from each other."

2 "Actually, I was unreasonably afraid of Muslim because their appearances looked scary. However, I noticed that my Islamic friends were very nice when I knew them later. They were also generous and good at taking care of us. Even though they were not good at English language, they tried to help and take care of us. It was an impressive experience at that time."

In terms of career and higher education, one interviewee mentioned that the exchange experience would benefit job application in the near future, even though there was not any response to the open-ended question relating to this aspect. The excerpt is shown below.

1 "The last benefit concerned higher education because I can add this experience in my CV which will be beneficial to me when applying for a job in the future."

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this present study were in accordance with several previous studies. Referring to the major findings focusing on social and cultural development, the findings are in line with the study of Messer and Wolter (2007) and Aydin (2012) in relation to altering participants' perception and awareness of cultural and individual differences since the findings of this study presented the reflection of the change of participants' attitude towards Muslim people as indicated earlier. The findings also confirmed that exchange program participation could promote a deep respect and understanding of different religions and people, cultural competency, establishing professional networking with overseas colleagues, and an immersion of cultural difference and sensitivity as underlined by previous studies (Guest, Livette, & Stone, 2006; Doyle et al., 2010; Daly, 2011; Baernholdt et al., 2013; Chi, 2013; Tekin & Gencer, 2013; Watson & Wolfel, 2015). It can be discussed that the students mostly achieved social and cultural outcomes from joining the exchange program. It not only builds relationships but it also raises cultural awareness and sensitivity. The students had a chance to meet new friends, a new environment, and also be involved in a new culture; therefore, they had to adapt and learn to live in another country. Apparently, social and cultural skills could be considerably increased throughout regular daily living; for instance, by joining student activities at the host university, class involvement with foreign students, or even having holiday trips both in the city and upcountry. Being assisted by new foreign friends they met there, can lead to relationship establishment which enhances students' social skills by learning and sharing with each other in all aspects of life such as living and food, cultural trips and engagement, and the difficulty of living abroad.



As it is underlined by the studies of Chi (2013) and Duffy, Farmer, Ravert, and Huittinen (2003) presenting that personal growth such as self-dependence, self-confidence, and open-mindedness could be elevated after the exchange program, the findings confirmed previous studies in terms of students' perspectives and self-development which could be altered as a result of international experience gained from participating in the exchange program (Frisch, 1990; Aydin, 2012). Referring to the major findings in personal development, adaptation skill was the most outstanding outcome since they experienced different environment in terms of learning atmosphere and methods, different academic settings, and outreach activities. For example, this skill could gradually be enhanced throughout community pharmacy practice and home healthcare service when they met their foreign patients at home where sometimes it was difficult to commute since it was located in a slum with an uninviting environment. These situations enabled students to develop their soft skills in order to get acquainted with people, absorb local living, immerse in local tradition and culture, and be respectful of others. Furthermore, as found by Guest, Livette and Stone (2006) personal development including self-confidence, adjustment and adaptation, awareness of own ethnocentrism, self-awareness and self-concept, autonomy and self-reliance, international perspective, responsibility skills, and problem-solving skill were also observed in the exchange. This is because they had a real chance to drill on their own living and develop self-capacity in order to be more matured and grown up. Also, being involved in a different environment and culture can unspectacularly cause personal change of behavior and way of thinking which allows the participants to gradually develop themselves with the aims to survive and be more adaptive.

Academic outcomes and language acquisition are one of the most anticipated benefits of joining the exchange program. To support prior relevant studies, the present findings confirmed the study of Tekin and Gencer (2013) and Doyle et al. (2010) focusing on the results that an involvement in another language and a chance to study subjects not available in the home country were benefits of exchange programs. As mentioned by the interviewee, they experienced a different academic course and were involved in pharmacy classes conducted with different teaching and learning techniques. Moreover, as offered by the Malaysian host university, they had a chance to attend a new course relating to animal drugs, which has never been taught in their home university. In terms of language acquisition both English and foreign language, this study also asserted previous studies that language acquisition and learning could be obtained throughout an overseas exchange (Guest, Livette and Stone, 2006; Aydin, 2012; Chi, 2013). In terms of language development, the outcomes revealed that they almost achieved all issues but less in enhancing English proficiency. This might be because they aimed to develop their English in overall aspects, but they might have used less academic English writing and reading which were mostly applied in classroom. On the other hand, they had more chance to communicate English in daily life by speaking and listening because they had to speak and listen to their foreign friends as confirmed by the major findings. Additionally, experiencing in different apprenticeship sites can strengthen students' capacity to deal with diversified materials; for instance, working on patient drug profile of foreign patients, the students are required to possess adequate knowledge in pharmaceutical science as well as international therapeutics in order to convey medical counseling and drug usage properly.



Apart from those dominant outcomes, the exchange program also benefited the career and professionals aspect. The findings of this present study are in line with Guest, Livette, and Stone (2006) in terms of job advantage, as well as a Messer and Wolter (2007) study concerning the relationship between student exchange program and higher starting salary. Their study concluded that a slight salary advantage of 3.3% of starting salary would be offered to the candidates who had experienced an exchange program. This can be probably implied that the candidates who have joined the student exchange program are likely to earn more salary than those who do not have. Furthermore, one of the interviewees of this present study stated that an indication of exchange experience on his CV would benefit him in job application.

The present study concludes that the most gained outcomes of Thai undergraduate pharmacy students participating in the exchange program were social and cultural outcomes, followed by personal development outcomes, academic and language outcomes, and career and higher education outcomes, respectively. According to the present study results, undergraduate pharmacy exchange students had a chance to obtain various soft skills and develop self-reliance throughout the exchange program. In terms of cultural and social development, they experienced an attitude altering as a global citizen regarding international aspects such as religion, tradition, ways of thinking, and individual respect. They were also involved in establishment of relationships and an overseas pharmacy professional network, an immersion of cultural difference and sensitivity, and a social engagement with foreign students and local people. Concerning personal development, they gradually obtained adaptation skill, dependability, self-finance, maturity improvement, and other essential skills such as leadership, decision-making skill, and self-responsibility. Referring to academic and language aspect, they considerably took part in different teaching methods in new and different academic settings to receive pharmacy professional knowledge and practice, a perception of overseas pharmacists' role in society, and foreign language acquisition and improvement including English language and local language. Last but not least, participation in an exchange tends to benefit job opportunity in the future. On the whole, the student exchange program has remained one of the effective mechanisms with the purpose of strengthening students' capacity including essential soft skills, desirable personality, foreign language proficiency, and academic performance. In addition, it remarkably raises socio-cultural competencies such as cultural awareness and sensitivity, intercultural interaction and recognition, and a respect of individual difference. With regard to a concept of a global citizen and 21st century skills, mastering these integrated competencies, being prompt for multi-dimension changes, and working with intercultural colleagues by using effective communication skill in diverse contexts are essential skills as a result of ASEAN integration. Emphasizing these concerns, the student exchange program would facilitate those who take part in the international exchange with the key purposes of peaceful living, cooperative working, enhancing mutual understanding and fruitful collaboration among ASEAN citizens. In terms of pharmacy education, this would elevate the learning and better understanding of the best and expertise, traditional practice, and differences in pharmacy education and profession of each ASEAN country. In terms of further program improvement, intensive cooperation and communication of the hosts and debriefing session of the exchange are likely to be key factors of the entire program in order to establish desirable content and activities in accordance with prospective outcomes.



Recommendation for Further Research

Based on the results and conclusion of this present study, further research is recommended to conduct in English language students or in other areas of health sciences students such as medical students, nursing students, and dentistry students in order to discover the different and similar contexts of joining student exchange program. Also, further research should investigate obstacles and constraints of participation in the exchange program. This would be beneficial to program administrator in terms of further improvement.

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