

Group-work Challenges and Improvements in a Multicultural Context

Case: JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Liu Lianzhe
Vu Khanh Linh

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Description <p>With the remarkable growth of collaborations between people from different cultures in the business world during the past years, this research explores how to respond to group-work challenges in a multicultural context at a higher education institution by investigating the traditions of group-work in different cultures, the cultural impacts on group-work and the strategies teachers and students use to handle group-work challenges.</p> <p>A case study approach was employed at JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland (JAMK). Through an exploratory research approach, qualitative data was collected and analysed using an inductive approach. Three semi-structured focus group discussions were conducted with 1) degree students, 2) exchange students and 3) teachers, in order to triangulate the data so that a comprehensive investigation of the topic from different perspectives would emerge.</p> <p>The results indicate that students bring to the university their own prior traditions and practices of group-work at school, and their expectations regarding the success of a group vary widely among students. The obstacles related to multicultural group-work are determined not only by the cultural differences between the members themselves, but also by the different education systems across work group members at JAMK. It is also implied that there are similarities and differences in the strategies to tackle group-work challenges suggested by students and teachers, which encourages recommendations to foster the communication among students and educators to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. The newly emerging themes from the findings offer new insights for further research.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

With the gradual deepening of economic globalization, exchanges and cooperation between countries and businesses from different cultural backgrounds has become increasingly close. International cooperation and assistance and exchanges in the area of the population have been expanding. In addition, university graduates around the world activities on the international platform have increased, students tend to work with people from different cultural backgrounds and work in multi-national corporations in their careers. Consequently, group-work challenges and difficulties will come. (Popov, Brinkman, Biemans, Mulder, Kuznetsov, & Noroozi 2012, 302.)

The previous research studies have presented challenges in group-work: “disagreement”, “attendance” and “unprepared students” (Jones & Conway 2011, 4-5), “motivations” issue (Kerr & Bruun 1983, 556-557), “Free-riding” (Davies 2009, 567), and how to deal with the problems emerging in group-work was pointed by Trauman, there are five approaches: “Avoidance, Accommodation, Compromise, Competition, Collaboration” (2007, 1-2). However, strategies to cope with difficulties in multicultural group-work have not been involved previously, and therefore it would be of interest to carry out more exploration of this field.

The thesis focuses on the group-work challenges and improvements in a multicultural context. This study aims to discuss the challenges and difficulties of multicultural group-work, culture impacts on group-work, and group members’ traditional group-work activities back home to further explore the strategies to respond to the challenges in multicultural group-work. Research questions and objectives are formed and qualified by the literature review.

The research applies inductive research approach to conduct three semi-structured focus group interviews with educators and degree and exchange students from different cultural backgrounds in a higher education institution, and the higher education institution Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) is considered as the case study for this research. JAMK University of

Applied Sciences is an international education institution located in the region of Central Finland, and there are more than 8000 international students from over 70 countries. (JAMK n.d.h.)

The results show that students tend to bring their unique traditions in multicultural group-work. There are differences in the expectations of group success among group members. In addition, the difficulties of multicultural group-work not only depend on the group members' different cultural background, but also by the different education systems across work group members at JAMK. It is also indicated that the approaches students and educators adopt to deal with group-work challenges have both similar and different aspects. It is recommended that students and teachers should enhance communication between the two sides to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.

Structure of the thesis: There are seven chapters in this thesis to discuss the group-work challenges and improvements in a multicultural context, and the main content of this paper is illustrated by a flowchart. (see Figure 1.) Figure 1. describes the structure of seven chapters of this thesis, which are presented as followings:

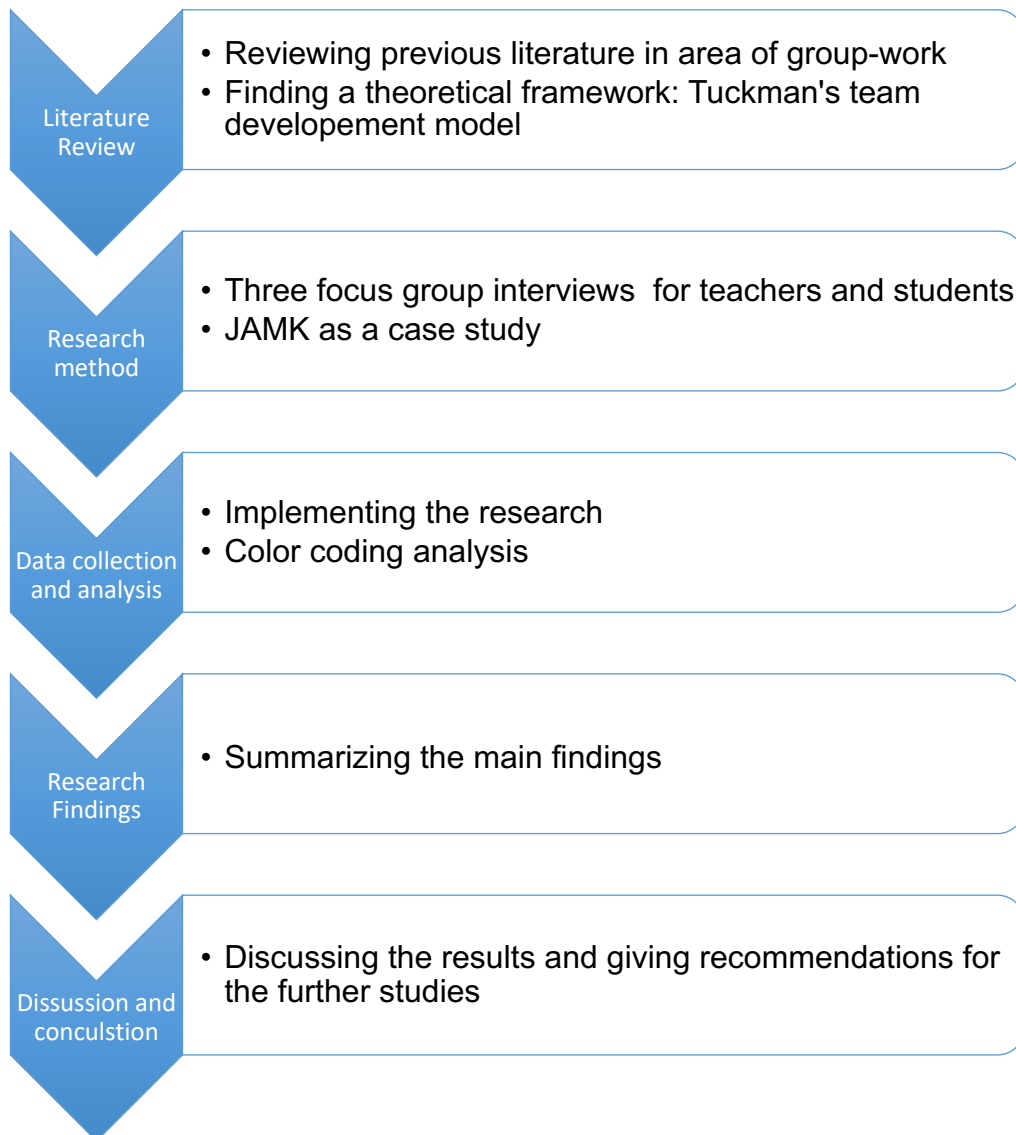


Figure 1. The structure of the thesis

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Owing to the quickening pace of life, competition goes increasingly fierce in all walks of life, stimulating everyone to pursue one goal after another. Team spirit becomes more and more important in the competition. A lot of work needs a group to complete because one personal ability is limited after all. In contemporary society, there is no denying that culture still remains a major part in determining people's ideas in some countries. International group-work within different cultural background is increasing. Multicultural background gives an increasingly important role in group-work.

However, differences between cultures also create challenges to the multicultural group-work. Therefore, it is necessary to consider that how to react to group-work challenges in the multicultural context, which still remains an unsolved problem.

This review will concentrate on group-work challenges and improvements in multicultural contexts. No attempt will be made to convince the reader that group-work with in multicultural contexts are always challenging and complex. In this review, this paper aims to highlight traditions of group-work learning in some countries, group-work problems and group-work improvements.

2.1 Group-work definition

There are a variety of angles with reference to the how group-work is defined. In regard to "group", Smith (2008) pinpointed 5 key ideas. First of all, in face of many definitions in terms of this topic, he started from the basis with 3 aspects: how many members there are, how they are connected and related to each other. Second, groups play a crucial role in developing "human experience". In addition, the group involves interrelationship between members. Moreover, it is of great use to ponder over whether the group is prearranged or unplanned. The final point is that members can gain insights into the procedure and formation of groups. As regards the "work", it refers to "working with". There are elements of emotion and connection. Thus, "working

with” is another way of “being with”. (Smith 2008.) Furthermore, Underwood (2003) stated that the term of group-work learning refers to learning environments in which students work together to achieve a common goal. In achieving that common goal, however, the members of the group may choose to take responsibility for subtasks and work co-operatively, or they may collaborate and work together on all parts of the problem. (320.)

Based on previous theories above, it is clearly that group-work is a collaborative learning group (also known as cooperative learning). In the early 1970s, the concept of group-work was mentioned in the UK and has been widely used in primary and secondary teaching practice (Pihillips 2001, 14). In addition to its unique social and cultural background, it is mainly to overcome the drawbacks of the traditional teaching way and thus it can reform classroom teaching to improve the needs of teaching efficiency. Group-work will integrate the principles of social psychology into teaching, emphasizing the promotion of interpersonal communication for the development of cognitive function. The basic approach is to form a group of heterogeneous learning groups (3-6 people in each group) according to their academic level, ability, personality, gender and social family background.

2.2 Tuckman’s Stages of Team development Model

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature of Tuckman’s theory in order to explore general concepts about group development.

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman published an essay entitled "*Development Sequence in Small Groups*" (1965, 384). He reviewed around 50 articles about small group development and found that common features from these small groups: the interpersonal or group structure, and the task activity (Teamwork Theory n.d.). According to these common features, Tuckman summarized common features of four stages of small group development model as “forming,” “storming,” “norming,” and “performing” (1965, 420). In 1977, Tuckman and Jensen revisited the original model and added a fifth stage in the four stage proposed, which is Adjourning (426).

Denise A (2010) also explained further concepts of five phases of group development model based on Tuckman's group theory describing.

Forming: In group's forming stage, 'testing and dependence' is the main core of this stage. The purpose of the testing is to identify interpersonal boundaries and task boundaries of the group, which can establish the relationship between group members, the relationship between group leaders and members, as well as various group standards. In addition, a group member's behaviour has considerable independence in this stage. In general group members lack the relevant information about group goals and activities during this period. Some group members may perform characteristics of instability and anxiety. Group leader ensures a working relationship of mutual trust among group members in order to share the concept of group development stage with group members. (113.)

Storming: Intergroup conflict and the problem of differentiation are arising during the group's storming stage. Members of the group want to show personal characteristics when facing the views from other members or moving into unknown areas of relations, dissatisfaction and frustration with group goals, expectations, roles and responsibilities are revealed.(ibid., 114.)

Norming: During the norming stage of a group development, group members adjust their behaviours to make the group operation more smooth, and began to form their own identity in a group. Thus, roles and norms are established (ibid., 114). Besides, group members solve the problem consciously to avoid group conflicts.

Performing: Interpersonal structure as a tool carries out task activities in the performing stage of a group. The role of the group is more flexible and functional as group operates as a whole (ibid., 114). Group members work smoothly and efficiently without any conflicts or external supervision. Group members have a clear understanding of their own responsibilities at the task level; they help each other even in the situation of lack of guidance from supervisors and make their own decisions.

Adjourning: In 1977 Tuckman and Jensen updated the original group development model to add a new stage: Adjourning. The fifth phase is described as "adjourning", reflected a group life cycle model (ibid., 114). In this stage, group members have a loss of the sense, and the level of motivation of group members declined, and uncertainty about the future of the group began to increase. The revised group development model is illustrated in Figure 1.

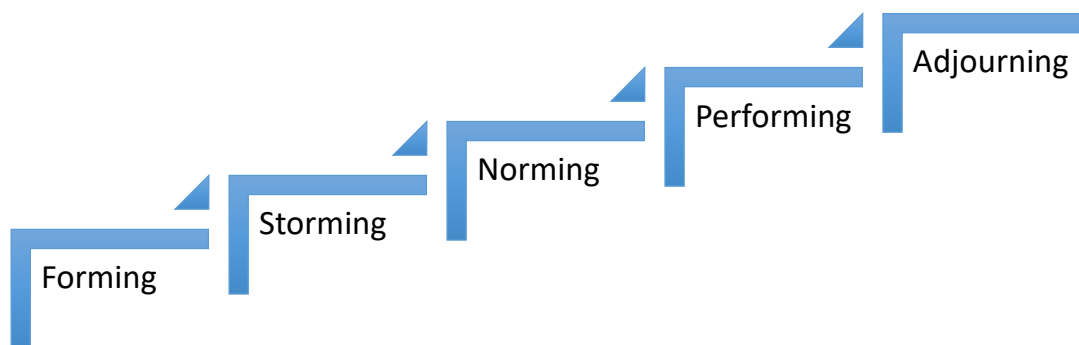


Figure 2: Tuckman's five stage model of small group development (1977)

Nestor (2013), and Mulder (2014) have their own explanations towards five stages of group-work development. As noted by Nestor (2013), there are five stages of a group: "forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning". Regarding the first phase, group members rely on the leader and seek for assistance because they are unsure about their roles and the tasks. The following stage is storming in which the refusal to do the work occurs and members still have doubts as well as showing their discrepancies. In the "norming" stage, people share their opinions on the issues and. Measures and methods are established to handle the work. Members now disregard distinctions between each other. The next phase is "performing" when members operate productively, tackle issues and work towards the ultimate goal of the group. In the final stage "adjourning", after having accomplished the work , people depart, reflect on their work and recognize their attainments. (Nestor 2013.)

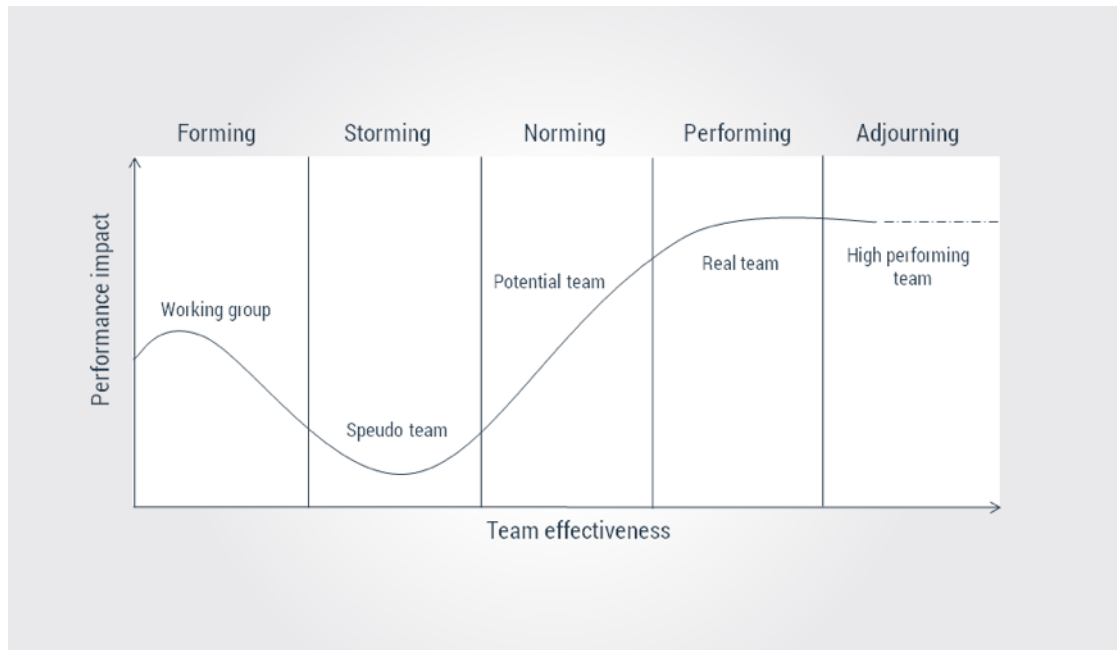


Figure 3: Tuckman's stages of group development (Mulder 2014)

Mulder (2014) also presented 5 phases of a group: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning as depicted in Figure 3 above. In the forming stage, it is essential that the trust should be established between the group leader and the group members and the leader share what he expects from the other members. The storming stage requires the group leader to be a guider and motivator for the group to share their ideas in an open manner. Moreover, conflicts need to be tackled by the group members. The norming stage highlights the self-reliance and the collaboration in the group. In the performing stage, the group delivers a great performance and collaborates well with each other. The adjourning stage is when the goal has been reached, and the group departs. (Mulder 2014.)

2.3 Traditions of group-work in some countries

The purpose of this chapter is to review group-work in different contexts and give an overall value of traditions of group-work in some countries. Reviewing these traditions of group-work in the different context can help both researchers and audiences to have an overall view of different communication behaviour, function, significance, and conflict of different cultures of group-

work. Also, exploring traditions of group-work in the different context is beneficial to audiences to understand the similarities and differences in learning and teaching culture of group-work from different countries.

Group-work in Finnish culture

Finnish values

Sow, Martikainen, and Salonen summarized three Finnish values at JAMK community: 'as a reliable person', 'rule oriented' and 'Equality, equity and fairness' (2015, 4-5.). This statement underlines the importance of the Finnish values' influence on each part of the JAMK's community, and each individuals' behaviors and values are also highly respected in Finnish society. In cooperative learning with Finns, 'as a reliable person' is one of their most important Finnish values. It indicates that both teachers and students are expected to follow promises and rules that they made in Finnish study culture. In addition, researchers emphasized that Finns are extremely rule oriented. (Sow et al. 2015, 4-5.) It is important for Finns to strictly to follow the rules under all circumstances. Equality, equity, and fairness is the direction of Finnish values. It means that every individual including teachers, students, staff, every culture, gender, and ethnicity at JAMK will be treated equally. (ibid., 4-5.)

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) explore the culture of a country or compare between different countries' cultures through "the six dimensions". They are namely "Power Distance, Individual, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation and Indulgence". (36-419.)

"Power Distance" indicates how people who are considered to have less power perceive and react towards the inequality. The figure for Finland is low, which indicates that equality plays a crucial role in the society. Directness, accessibility and participation, informality are noticeable features in communication. The "Individual" dimension relates to the concept of "Individual" or "Collectivist". The statistics for Finland implies that in Finnish culture, there is expectation of people to look after of "themselves and their

families only". With a low figure in the dimension "Masculinity", it is implied that Finland is a "Feminine society", in which "well-being", life quality are vital and the rank or position is not demonstrated. (ibid., 36-182.)

In the "Uncertainty Avoidance" dimension, the statistics for Finland indicates that people prefer to avoid ambiguity and "rules, time, punctuality" are attached importance to. The score of Finland is low for the "Long term orientation" dimension. Thus, it is considered that traditions and the truth play a crucial role in the culture. In the dimension "Indulgence", Finland score is quite high, which denotes that people incline to be optimistic and they value "leisure time" and life enjoyment. (ibid., 182-419.)

Finnish study culture

According to Finnish Network for International Programs (Finnips), University of Applied Sciences in Finland are well-known for its feasible teaching and learning approach with the emphasis on "group-work and cooperation" (Practically-oriented Bachelor's Degrees in Finland 2016, 1). As also highlighted by the National Centre on Education and the Economy (NCEE), Finnish education system attaches great importance to group-work, which encourages students in collaboration with each other through educational levels (Finland: Instructional Systems, n.d.). Ribeiro, Gabardo, Sislian and Macedo (2015) asserted that group-work is adopted as one of the most widespread approaches in Finnish education with a view to fostering cooperation between students. Groups undertake the tasks with no involvement from teachers, which reflects the student-centred learning method in Finnish education. " Failures and difficulties are less important than qualities". This approach provides all members with the opportunities to make contributions to the group and offer support to each other in face of the obstacles by utilizing their capabilities. Teachers play the role of guiders and supporters in the case of hurdles and hardships arising in the groups. " Learning is not a teacher's responsibility anymore, but it is a group task". (64-65.)

Many foreigners believe that Finns are shy, which is a common stereotype that they hold (Sow, Martikainen, & Salonen 2015, 4). However, it is found that individual behavior might cause the changes in people's expectations in Finnish study culture. At Finnish school JAMK, the key to learning Finnish culture, values, and behavior is experiencing Finnish study culture. In learning and teaching traditions in Finnish study culture, lecturers encourage students to independently track their learning courses and tasks or assignment progress and expect students to take the initiative to take personal responsibility in the learning process, such as your attendance and your own study task. JAMK community is an open and learning oriented school environment. (Sow et al. 2015, 5.) Interactive communication between teachers and students is very common in Finnish classrooms, where students are supposed to ask questions without any hesitates to their teachers through class, email, or making an appointment. Working in different groups at JAMK is experienced by every student, it means that JAMK is creating an international working environment where every student has an opportunity to learn how to cooperate with students from different cultures, age, personalities, and gender. Students are able to learn the working environment of different cultures through the practice of multicultural group-work at JAMK. (ibid., 4-5.)

Group-work in Chinese culture

Li, Remedios, and Clarke investigated students' group-work practices in China (2014, 227-241). The idea of group-work in China came from in recent Medium-and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) (MOE 2010). Because the country began to improve interactive learning and changed traditional learning and teaching approaches, Chinese teachers, students or educational organizations in society are strongly encouraged to have group-work activities in a normal class.

These three researchers gave an overall value of Chinese students' real values and views towards group-work activities. When Chinese students in group-work, they commonly had both individual and collective benefits from

their group-work. According to a different type of group-work in China, the responses from group members are obviously different. In student-initiated group-work, social-emotional, cognitive and collective well-being factors were highlighted. In addition, according to different group organizer, the purpose of group-work activities in China are not the same. For example, group-work organized by the League and Party, group members professional skills and collective benefits for a whole group were emphasized. In teacher-initiated group-work, equity of responsibilities and efficiency was emphasized. (2014, 235.)

It is fairly common that Chinese students more focus on the individual benefits, collective well-being and group skill development that they associate with group-work (229). In addition, their study has documented the collectivist culture in Chinese students' group-work experiences. In this case, traditional Chinese culture appeared to play a role in group-work practices in this context. The collectivist value significantly influences on individuals of group-work. The impact of the traditional culture as it was spontaneously practiced by the students. In other words, Chinese students in group-work more emphasize overall group's performance and the supervisors' feedback.

Group-work in Vietnamese culture

As noted in the report on the present situation of tertiary education in a number of Vietnamese universities across a wide range of fields, more and more "group projects" are introduced in the program as engaging learning approaches (Silvera, Angle, Hajek, Hopcroft, Rutherford, Semrau, Snoeyink, Alfen, McNamara, Nguyen, & Petrochenkov 2014, 12). Moreover, Collins and Mclaughlin (2014, 342) affirmed that group-work is a usual practice for Vietnamese students after the first researcher's experience of teaching in a faculty of social work at a higher education institution in Vietnam.

A study has been done in the Faculty of Business and Law in Vietnam National University regarding group-work. It was concluded that most students and teachers know and understand group-work methods. Thus, they have a

high work productivity, but there exists a number of limitations: a number of students do not actively participate in group-work, which leads to they over depending on other group members. During group-work, there are not many students who give and defend their opinions. The size of many groups is too large, which do not leverage all abilities and capabilities of all members and reduce group productivity. The lack of understanding, solidarity and group planning is another challenge. (Le, Doan, Phan, & La 2009, 51.) Furthermore, Vu (2015) gave a general overview of the challenges Vietnamese people face in group-work. He also asserted the hesitation to be against other members' opinions as another hindrance in group-work, which stems from Vietnamese values of strong bonds and harmony between people in the community. Miscommunication is also considered as challenging in group-work. (Vu 2015.)

2.4 Possible factors involved in group-work

Group-work is challenging and complex because groups are complex. There has been a lot of study on the improvement of effectiveness in group-work, and the essential factors that caused the group-work difficulties.

As stated by Donald (1985), he claimed that each member of a group has psychological exploration, growth, and change as their goals interact with one another and with the group leaders interact patterns. On his study, three major criteria will influence the effectiveness of group-work performance, there is the psychological maturity of the group members, leadership style, and the type of task. (59.)

A number of factors which have an influence on the effectiveness of co-operative and collaborative learning have been shown on Underwood's study. He found that there was a correlation between sex, group size, ability mix, subject domain, task type, organization and group-work result. On his study, the performance of group-work will be affected by these following factors: the characteristics of each group member, the level and the type of assessment produces in operation, and individual differences in a group. An interesting

finding of his study is that females in a group prefer to ask help from tutors, and have fewer conflicts, comparing to male members.(2003, 319.)

2.5 Challenges in Group-work

The objective of this section is to gain insights into the challenges facing students when working in groups.

Jones and Conway (2011) presented the three most mentioned challenges in group-work in their research: "disagreement", "attendance" and "unprepared students". To be specific, students had difficulty reaching a consensus. The lack of attendance together with the lack of engagement also cause hindrance to group-work. (4-5.) Another trouble is figuring out the meeting time slots which fit everyone. The matter with attendance was also stated by Burdett (2003) as a menace to group-work. (Burdett 2003, 185.)

In addition, according to Davies (2009), Kerr and Bruun (1983) and Morgan (2002) indicated the "motivation" issue as one of the most severe detriments to group-work. There can be hesitation and absence of commitment to group-work. The matter of "Free-rider" - attaining achievements without any attempts- also does harm to group-work. (566-567.) Likewise, Burdett (2003) emphasized the imbalance in contribution to group-work of group members as one of the major hurdles occurring in group-work. He also mentioned "free riding" as one associated difficulty facing group-work. Specifically, groups encounter these issues when members are over-dependent on others and do not make endeavours into the group-work. (184.) As also cited in Davies (2009, 567), Kerr (1983) highlighted that "sucker effect" issue occurs when group members react to "others free-riding by free-riding themselves".

Group-work conflicts

As cited in Beard (2004), Dee Kelsey and Pam Plumb stated the causes of conflict: the issues with the way members communicate and exchange information, the discrepancy in what they want and prioritize and the distinction in how they value, perceive, believe and react together with cultural

diversity. The problem regarding with structure was also mentioned. (Beard, 2004.) A notable point Petrini (1990) presented is that it is common to think conflicts are not easy to deal with because of the presumptions people have. For instance, in their mind, it is group members who are to blame instead of the system or the others are acting irrationally, and winning-losing will be the result of conflict handling. (17.)

Kolb (2013) asserted that there are both the favourable side and downside of conflicts considering the kinds of conflicts and how groups cope with conflicts. It is of importance to have “Substantive conflict” when groups select strategies with little time for analysis. On the other hand, “Personal conflict” concerning lasting discord which is unrelated to work costs a great deal of time and poses threats to the group result. “Substantive conflict” can also do great harm to the group if it is not solved properly. (79.)

Regarding the conflict styles, Trautman (2007) pinpointed that conflict handling comprises 5 approaches: “ Avoidance, Accommodation, Compromise, Competition, Collaboration”. “Avoidance of conflict” has a good application in the case that the group do not have a big rivalry or more time is essential to help people to regain their composure and understand more about the situation. “Accommodation” aids to remind people of the goal of the whole team and pinpoint the similarities between members to connect them. This is an instance of this method: “Though we can’t seem to agree on the distribution details, we do agree as a group to financially support the city youth centre. Let’s form a subcommittee to work through the final details.” “Compromise” is essential when people have shared concession. “Competition” has a devastating effect because it emphasizes the competitiveness between members. “Cooperation” takes the group members to devote their time and have faiths in others. However, it is a great tool to energize people and stimulate their creativity. (1-2.)

Petrini (1990) depicted a number of steps for the facilitator to leverage the honesty in groups: Every member receives one pile of cards. The number of cards in one pile is the same as the number of group members. Then each

person notes down all members' names on the cards they have. Everybody finishes remarks for every name on each card regarding what "this person" has already done, needs to do or stop to contribute positively to the group. The facilitator organizes the cards by each name of the people in the group. It is necessary to check if there are any cards with hurting words. The card piles are distributed to each member so they can understand what other members think about them. The facilitator encourages members to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the cards they own and whether they think if these cards are true for them. (17.)

Challenges in multicultural context

Excluding the factors of personality traits, the motivation or interests and other personal factors, cultural differences might be one of the challenges which greatly influences group-work. In order to further explore the situation of challenges in group-work, focusing on a specific context is significant to the direct observation of actions and behaviours in group-work.

Popov and colleagues (2012) conducted a research to investigate the obstacles arising when students do group-work in the multicultural setting in higher education as well as the discrepancies in their viewpoints of the significance of the difficulties in "multicultural student group-work" The primary obstacles facing all respondents were "free-riding", inadequate English proficiency and miscommunication. In addition, "the students' cultural background (the individualist–collectivist dimension)" has an effect on the way students perceive how important challenges in MCSG are. (302.)

Martin (2014) stated that one of the downsides of multi-culture at work is the likelihood of "interpersonal conflicts", which result from the variations in how people view, think, value and believe. The consequences are related to how managers cope with them. (89-90.)

As pinpointed by Melles (2004), there is a link between culture and how people behave in groups. In his study, for example, it was asserted that

distinctions in culture and background in languages had effects on students' response when discussing in groups. Their way of discussion reflected their background. For instance, silence in a group as an indicator of cultural aspects can impede involvement in group-work. (Davies 2009, 568.)

In the project report undertaken in JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Nahkamäk (n.d.) identified a number of stumbling blocks multicultural groups confront. One of the threats to group-work is unpunctuality or absence resulting from the common manners "in some cultures" in which these issues do not matter as much. Furthermore, misinterpretations were also mentioned as an impediment to group-work in multicultural context. The cause of these hindrances were stated to be the difference in how members decipher the work. As a consequence, there can be a mismatch or not a good combination of members' own parts. In addition, the capabilities of English are varied, which can culminate in some hardships when members have difficulty expressing their viewpoints. (15.)

Group-work at JAMK

According to the official website, JAMK University of Applied Sciences (JAMK), located in City of Jyväskylä, Central Finland, is a distinguished higher education institution which focuses on eight study areas. JAMK is a global platform which nurtures and leverages more than 8000 students from over 70 countries. (JAMK University of Applied Sciences, n.d.)

JAMK University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) is a typically international university in Jyväskylä, Finland. Multicultural collaboration at JAMK is attached to great importance and internationalisation gains the strong encouragement (Welcome to International JAMK, n.d.). Students and teachers from different cultural backgrounds learn and teach in English. Learning in multicultural background promotes intercultural communication between students and teachers from different cultural background.

Crawford (2013) gave new insights into the group-work in this cross-cultural context. This video gained inspiration from the study undertaken at JAMK in

2011. He introduced the video: "In The New Math of Multicultural Workgroups" which depicts a fictional group-work project with the involvement of five multicultural students at the university. Not all group-work are problematical or challenging. The research aims to discuss and find out potential challenges and problems in group-work, and find approaches to address those problems. In the research, there were four fundamental points concerning the way to deal with challenges: obstacles in academics, discrepancy in culture, linguistic obstacles and problems when people interact. Group-work in cross-cultural setting was considered as one of the most prominent issues regarding the academic aspect. The video revolves around this angle and underlines that "the "new math" analogy (how the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts can be applied to all group-work, including multicultural groups." Crawford pointed that finding a way for each person in a group is the main challenge. The approach can be more flexible. When people go for different situations, they always go back the ways they used to. "Getting to know each other " in a group needs much time. Thinking positively, and finding a new way are also approaches to solve group-work conflicts in university's context.

2.6 Suggested enhancements to challenges in group-work

In face of the obstacles hindering group-work, this section depicts a number of improvements to group-work in the multicultural setting.

As stated by Jones and Conway (2011), a recommended strategy is that lecturers can adjust evaluations of group-work in which the score of group-work does not constitute largely to the whole grade. Moreover, leveraging the involvement of the students and the professor is also beneficial to the group-work. Specifically, students will present their feedback to their group partners in a constructive way, which will come under revision by the professor. (5-6.)

Furthermore, it is essential to take into account of "time management and communication". Encouraging students to gain confidence and be cooperative

is of importance as well. Locating a fixed time slot or working online were recommended for problems with meeting arrangement. (Burdett 2003, 187.)

Additionally, Nahkamäk (n.d.) presented a number of suggestions for enhancements in the project conducted in JAMK University of Applied Sciences. It is recommended that there be a framework with explicit regulations and objectives. Besides, JAMK UAS and teachers play an indispensable role in assisting students to overcome the obstacles in multicultural group-work. Specifically, it is vital that teachers point out the likely challenges and offer students the guidance to cope with these. What matters is to ensure that students have support if necessary. (16-17.)

Davies (2009) made recommendations for reducing free-riding and loafing in group-work. For the recommendations of both issues above, It stated that the effort of group members, as well as reward the work of individuals should be considered carefully and equally in a group. Besides, it requires that each group member needs to get to know each other's better. Lastly, group tasks need to be designed to maximize group members' contributions and notice their own performances in a group. (563.)

Dolmans, Wolfhagen, Vleuten, and Wijnen (2001) witnessed the situation from teacher's point of view to explore that how to solve the problem in group-work. As they noted, one of the main reasons why some teachers have negative experiences with group-work problem solving is partly due to that those teachers have experienced only the teacher-directed educational programs. When teachers are facing disappointed results in group-work, they easily tend to solve problems with their own personal experiences. It is not surprising that teachers prefer to highly rely on their own personal teaching experiences and intuitive beliefs to solve problems of group-work. (887.) They discussed the learning and teaching way of group-work, and they stated that:

Group learning is no guarantee of successful learning, but the stimulation of interactions between students is a prerequisite(888).

It has been observed that group-work improvement such as regular evaluation of group performance, group member self- and peer assessment, and stimulating elaboration are appropriate to solve some problems in group-work in order to stimulate students to actively involve group-work learning, and help students take their own responsibilities in a group. Teacher's skill, the evaluation system of group-work employed in the curriculum and student's stimulating elaboration these are all based on student-oriented group-work learning instead of teacher-oriented group-work.

3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This study aims to explore how to react to group-work challenges in a multicultural context. With this purpose, the main research question has been devised: What are strategies to respond to group-work challenges in multicultural context at a higher education institution? JAMK University of Applied Sciences is chosen as the case study for this study.

To figure out the answer, there are three sub-questions which need to be dealt with: The first question is: What are the traditions of group-work back home for higher education students? The next question is: What are the cultural impacts on group-work at JAMK? How should teachers and students cope with group-work challenges at JAMK? is another sub-question to be investigated.

4 METHODOLOGY

It is crucial that a methodology is devised for research (Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi 2013, 5). As stated by Nayak (2009), it is of great importance for the researchers to design an appropriate shape of the research with a view to avoiding wasting time and money. According to Williams (2011), the Industrial Research Institute (2010) defined research methodology as how the outcome of a particular issue is investigated. Diverse principles are taken into consideration. The term "Methodology" itself refers to

the measures by which the research problem is examined and scrutinized. (Williams (2011.)) The following chapter gives insights into the methods and tools to use in this study and state explicitly how to collect the data, sample selection, application of theory.

4.1 Research context

The global economy continues to recover, emerging economies and emerging markets are in the sluggish recovery in the world. Economic growth at a global level is at slowdown. According to the International Monetary Fund issued *World Economic Update January 2016*, the report indicated that the year of 2016 witnessed financial turmoil in global markets. Destabilising factors of the world economy and the uncertainties affected global growth have increased. The global economy has experienced a stage of stable economic growth or moderate growth. (2016a, 1.)

Countries around the world focus on global economic stability and recovery. In a sign of rising confidence in the financial market, commodities have rebounded. The demand for emerging markets currencies means that other advanced economies' currencies will decline in relative importance, but the real economy is still weak. Affected by the global economic slowdown and sluggish international demand, global trade growth continued to slow in 2015. (ibid., 3.)

The global economy grew by 2.8 per cent see Appendix 3 in 2015 (International Monetary Fund 2016b, 168), and it is for fourth consecutive years below world economic growth. China and many emerging economies in Asia become an important role in promoting the development of global economy (ibid., 146). Europe's economic recovery reflects the fragility of the world economic recovery. More generally, the external environment of the European economy is also facing a variety of challenges. In Britain, for example, British leaves the European Union, which could interfere with existing trade relations, and lead to severe regional and global impacts. Also,

a large number of refugees into Europe exacerbated by political pressure in Europe. (International Monetary Fund 2016a, 4.)

In today's world, political tensions, which have a significant impact on global economic stability and international political structure, would result in an economic slowdown. European countries have received unprecedented support from the public, which not only seriously affects the economic development of countries, but also has an influence on the EU system, the Euro currency, and the European market. (2016b, 168.)

Although the global economy tends to be slow growth, the economy development picture remains positively. International cooperation and assistance and exchanges in the area of the population have been expanding. There are more and more collaborations across countries, leading to the increasing number of multi-national corporations. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of university graduates who work in the international environment such as multi-national corporations where they have multicultural colleagues. Consequently, group-work challenges and difficulties will come. In order to help students work smoothly with different cultures in the future careers, they need to know the strategies to the challenges in multicultural group-work. (Popov et al. 2012, 302.)

4.2 Research approach

The research focuses on the challenges and improvements of group-work in multicultural contexts. In the first part of this chapter, this paper elaborates the research philosophy and research methods adopted to achieve the purpose of the study.

It is necessary for researchers to seek theoretical support from research philosophies in a certain field to carry out research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, 106). The significance of research philosophy and research approach is that: The primary purpose of **Research Onion** is to help researchers with the methods of data collected to answer their research questions. Before considering the centre point of the research onion,

researchers need to select the data of collection techniques and analysis methods by peeling away the layers of onion step by step. (ibid., 106.)

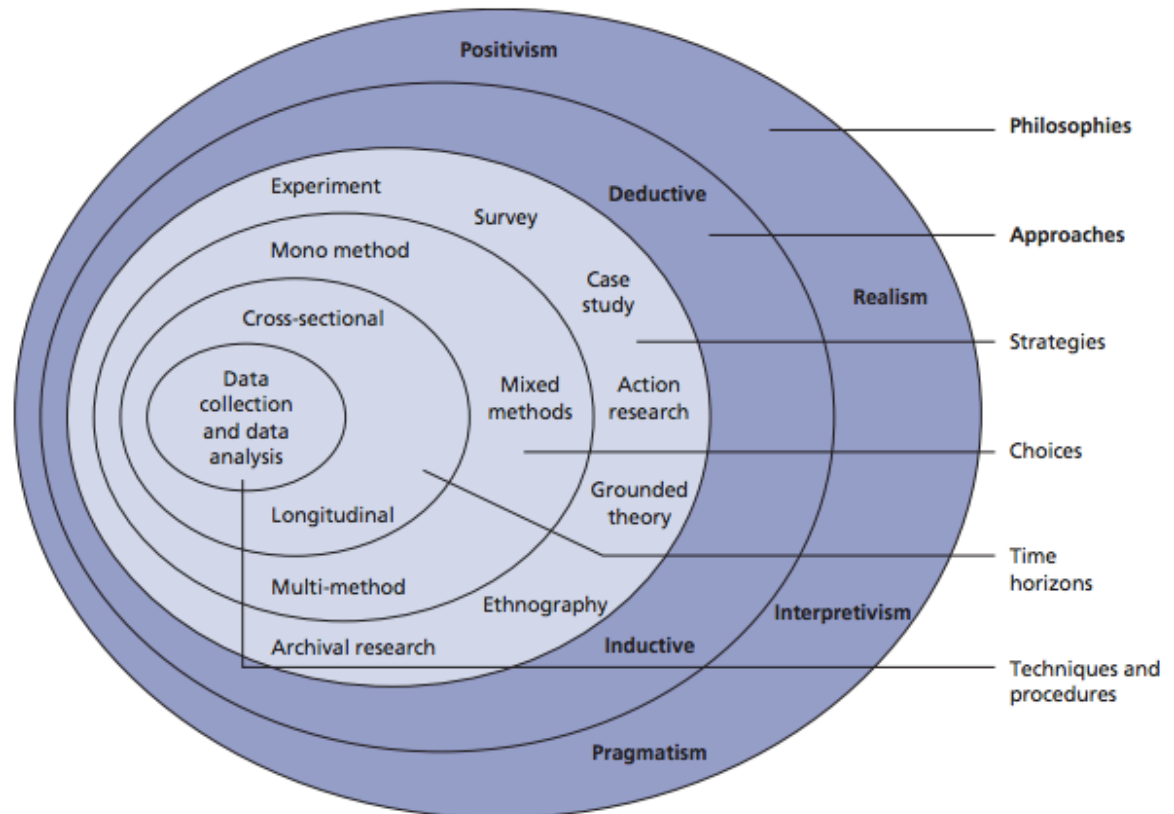


Figure 4. The research onion (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2008, cited in Saunders et al., 2009, 108)

Figure 4. refers to the so-called research onion (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2008, 108), which clearly indicates that the researchers from the discovery of the research problem to the point of answering the research questions, and this way need to be applied to the theoretical basis for research philosophy and methodology. The researchers used the research philosophy to show the researchers' research strategies and methods. According to the research process onion model, researchers can clearly understand the primary focus of their research, such as to achieve what kind of goals, the choice of research

approaches, etc.. The application of philosophical position can show the way of thinking and values of the researchers (108).

Later in this chapter, the research will be based on each layer of the research process onion. To further explain the theoretical methods and philosophies used in this study, a general picture is provided for the readers.

Manerikar and Manerikar (2014) stated that exploratory research is highly effective in enriching the awareness and knowledge of the topic. Exploratory research establishes the foundations for the clarification and identification of the issue. It is usually adopted with the goal of idea generation. (95-96.) This study aims to give sights into group-work challenges and improvements in multicultural context at JAMK University of Applied Sciences and widens the knowledge pool concerning this field of study. Hence, exploratory research is regarded as appropriate.

Saunders and colleagues noted remarkable points regarding the induction. According to them, the inductive approach enables an awareness of the "meanings" people associates with "events". Furthermore, induction encourages more adaptability in the "structure", which allows alterations during the procedure. In addition, the research engages with the research procedures in the inductive approach. Another notable aspect is that adopting this approach is proper to "qualitative data collection". (Saunders et al. 2009, 120.) The inductive approach was also regarded by Gabriel (2013) as applicable to the research encouraging "new or emerging area within the discipline". This research focuses on providing deeper insights into the topic "group-work challenges and improvements" as well as stimulating the exploration of novel and emerging themes. Thus, it is considered appropriate for this study to employ the inductive approach, which is in line with this explorative and qualitative research.

Saunders and colleagues gave an explanation of research strategy: "the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions" (Saunders et al. 2009, 600). As cited in Wedawatta, Ingirige and

Amaratunga (2011, 5), Yin (2003) asserted the preference of case study over other types when the research requires the answer to the “how” and the “why”. One of the essential questions of this study is “How should teachers and students cope with group-work challenges at JAMK?”. Thus, case study is regarded as an appropriate research strategy. Moreover, Rowley (2002, 16) affirmed the effectiveness of a case study in obtaining an examination of the topic in depth. Yin (2004) emphasized that case study helps the research gain insights into the matter. The case study obtains the most effective implementation when tackling “descriptive or explanatory questions” with a view to attaining the awareness of “people and events” in real life. (1-3.) Hence, utilizing the case study as the research strategy powerfully enables the researchers to gain deep insights into the group-work challenges and improvements in the multicultural context.

The case study is to be embedded in JAMK. This option is considered as appropriate since although JAMK is an educational setting, the university operates as a business from the entrepreneurial angle. Moreover, according to the official website, multicultural collaboration at JAMK is attached to great importance, and internationalisation gains the strong encouragement (Welcome to International JAMK, n.d.). There are a large number of international students and group-work is a common practice. In addition, the researchers are currently International Business students specializing in Cross-Cultural Management academic track. Hence, JAMK students and teachers as the interviewees are considered accessible and reachable. Accordingly, undertaking the research at JAMK would be a proper choice.

According to Mayoux (2011), qualitative research originates from the fields: “humanities: sociology, anthropology, geography and history”. It focuses on raising awareness and providing knowledge of complicated procedures. The sampling is on a small scale. In general, qualitative research normally centres around a collection of “case studies” in a narrow scope together with interviews and observation. Examining the same topic, Mac, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2011) provide a fundamental base of qualitative research. This kind of study involves an examination which figures

out "answers to a question", gathers data and reveals "findings" which were not identified ahead. (1.)

Qualitative research is of great importance when attaining explicit data regarding viewpoints, manners, beliefs of a specific group. There are three major "methods" in qualitative research: "participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups". (ibid., 2.) It is essential that focus groups be adopted when seeking the information concerning the cultural practices of a group and producing a picture of the matters involved in that group.

Qualitative research is powerful in utilizing "open-ended questions" which propel attendants to share their points of views openly and not to be limited to any rigid or pre-set answers. "Open-ended questions" enables thoughtful and culturally essential replies, unexpected responses and enriches the data.

(ibid., 2-4.) Ospina (2004) also emphasizes the benefits of qualitative research when investigating a new matter, enriching the current data and providing a greater understanding of the issue. Original and new angles are expected to be found in qualitative research. In addition, this type of research enables the researcher to explore the topic from the viewpoints of people involved instead of playing the role of an outsider. (9.) Accordingly, the qualitative research together with the focus groups provides the researchers with an efficient platform not only to gain deeper understanding but also to explore the topic of this research: group-work challenges and improvements in the multicultural context in an open manner, from different angles, and allow possibilities for new or even novel findings.

Furthermore, Mac and colleagues stated that qualitative research is useful to seek answers for "why" and "how", which requires the researchers to be immersed in the process to stimulate participants to provide detailed and insightful responses (Mac et al. 2011, 4). Therefore, adopting the qualitative research integrates closely with the case study as the aforementioned research strategy.

Researchers decided to conduct focus group interviews with qualitative research to find group-work challenges and improvements in multicultural

contexts. According to Robson (2007), a focus group interview has been defined as that typically involves seeking answers to a list of standard questions from selected group of people. Researchers choose this method in using representative samples from unknown participants resulting in readily results where the situation in the population can be estimated with the known probability. (Robson 2007, 41.) As noted above, a focus group interview is an investigation method for research to infer the general characteristics based on sample information.

Type of interviews selected: semi-structured interview

Usually, focus group interviews can be classified into certain categories. In this research, a semi-structured interview as an ideal research method was chosen. The semi-structured interview is defined as a conversation in which participants of the interview are asked a list of questions, to gain their opinions towards a thing in an informal way. A semi-structured interview is a form of a non-structured interview and structured interview. (Cambridge Business English Press 2017).

According to Bernard (1988), the best chance to use semi-structured interview is that researcher is hard to have more than one chance to interview participants (38). The semi-structured interview is a work that interviewees to follow some relevant topics and list of questions which should be covered in a particular order. When interviewees are accustomed to efficiently used of their time to express opinions, it indicates that researchers make full use of interview to gain what they want from an interview. (ibid., 210.) The reason that why the semi-structured interview was selected as a method for this study is that the researchers can narrow down some areas in the topic of group-work challenges and improvements in multicultural contexts to gain more useful information that they need.

There are some advantages to using the semi-structured interview as an ideal method for data collection of this research. Firstly, it is suited to the

exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motivations (Smith 1975); the semi-structured interview is that every responder in a focus group interview gets the same questions asked, there is flexibility in how researchers ask. Notably, researchers explore the views of a participant towards something, or researchers get interests in some answers, other questions will emerge from dialogue. The semi-structured interview is a good method for this research because this method not only directly gain practical answers, views, and values from participants towards each question but also increase response rate in a whole group discussion (Austin 1981). Besides, this approach also ensures every member answer on his or her way to maximise to get useful information that researchers need (Whiting LS 2008, 36), and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data. According to Whiting's statement of an interview process, figure 2 interview process cycle is illustrated below (see Figure 5).

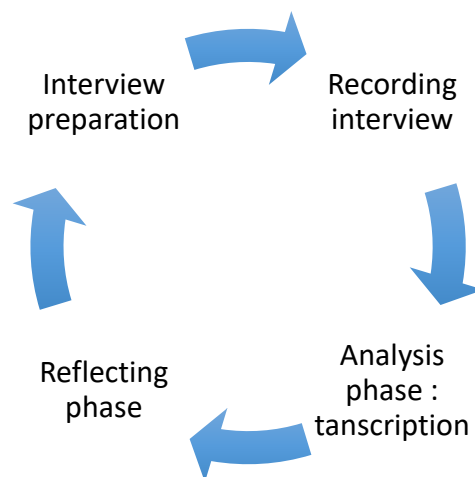


Figure 5. Interview process cycle overview

Researchers think that focus group interviews seem to be a more authentic approach than a convenient personal interview or questionnaire in exploring group-work challenges and improvement research, particularly in the multicultural background. It allows participants to put forward a tentative explanation, and then other group members can be rejected; it also allows

participants to put their views on others. These are the things that happen in real life. (Hu 2010, 282.) Focus group interview is a very widely used approach which can communicate well with selected participants. It is evident that this research method benefits for researchers to explore the psychological state of the respondents by talking directly to the researchers. When conducting an interview, researchers directly face-to-face communicate with participants and observe the whole situation. Once researchers have confirmed their research scope, the value of focus group interview is that researchers often get some unexpected findings from a group discussion. (ibid., 283.)

However, focus group interviews also have some limitations. When participants free to share their opinions, it makes researchers try to ask more questions to sharpen understanding in an interesting area; but sometimes this full control of interview might lead to exercise excessed interference (Bernard 1988, 210). It requires that researchers should carefully control the process of an interview (Robson 2007, 74). According to Whiting LS (2008), the problem with the poor response rate of a question during focus group interview might be caused by concerning ethical issues and confidentiality as a priority when participants are being interviewed, and thus they might consider whether they are willing to answer questions or not (39). Confidentiality described by Levine (1981) as the information that each interviewee shares and exchange during the conversation cannot be passed on to others in any forms or any purpose (285). To a certain degree, focus group interviews provide more freedom for interviewees to express their views, but group discussion is not suitable for every group member to talk as much as possible at particular times (Hu 2010, 282). It is challenging for researchers to understand a real situation for a focus group interview and control every responder's real situation. In this case, Hu has pointed out that participants are much easier to stray from the point of the selected topic, and suggested researchers should put the topic back to the discussion.(ibid., 282.)

Data collection

To achieve the research objective and the research question, this research combines both primary and secondary data. According to Surbhi (2016), secondary data is obtained from another sources previously while primary data is originally gathered by the researchers. Secondary data is adopted in this study in the form of the literature review which investigates a wide range of sources such as books, journals and online publications. The primary data collection focuses on the focus group interview as the primary data collection method.

Dilshad and Latif (2013, 191) emphasized that focus group interview plays a vital role in acquiring the qualitative data. With the same viewpoint, Schuck, Allen and Larson (2004, 6) mentioned focus group interview as an effective way to obtain worthwhile data if it is appropriately implemented. As can be seen from Figure 6. below, in this research, three focus group interviews were conducted as the means for data collection with the participants for each group in the following order: degree students, exchange students and teachers at JAMK. Accordingly, three sample types provide the opportunity to investigate the topic from diverse perspectives, which helps to avoid bias or subjective one-way opinions. In addition, the attendants were expected to come from different countries with different backgrounds: Indian, Finnish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, American, Japanese and French. These chosen interviewees would be applicable to the aim of the research: exploring how to react to group-work challenges in the multicultural context. The whole procedure was undertaken in English, which is the common means of communication for every participant.

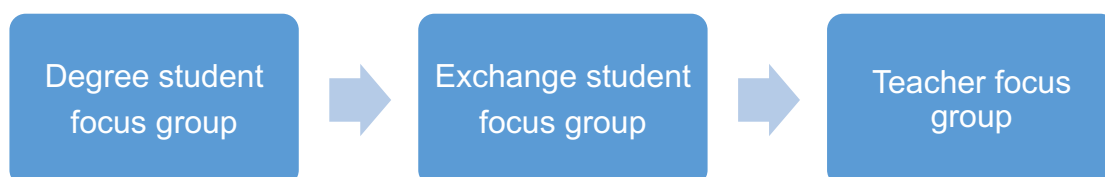


Figure 6. Three types of focus groups in order of the process

In the first place, the research objective and the research question were taken into consideration with a view to producing proper interview questions. Overall, each interview comprised around ten questions. The questions were divided into different categories with each aiming to figure out the answers to one aspect of the topic. The questions were presented clearly in more detail in the Appendix. Yin (2004) asserted that it is possible that obtaining data and analysing data occur hand in hand. For example, when the result from one interview is in disagreement with the previous one, the researcher can make adjustments to the procedures such as having an interview again or investigating another “source” to handle the clash. (3.) Thus, the content of the questions for each focus group was almost the same except for a number of proper alterations as the process proceeded. For instance, the teacher focus groups more emphasized the suggestions and recommendations from the teacher’s perspective. Moreover, some related data in the student focus groups were also taken into account to introduce some new but relevant questions in the teacher focus group afterwards.

After the interview questions were designed, email invitations were sent to people who agreed to offer their contact emails. The researchers also attained the research authorization from JAMK for the information about email addresses of the potential interviewees. Doodle scheduling was also employed during the process to find the most appropriate time slots for the participants. In the invitation emails, an introduction was provided regarding the researchers, the research objectives together with the doodle link for filling in the suitable time. The emails were written in a formal style with precise but thorough information regarding the interviews with a view to drawing great attention from the recipients. However, it was not easy to garner participants to student focus group interviews. Originally, the researchers aimed to establish two focus group interviews for degree students and exchange students with five participants for each group. Nevertheless, for the exchange student focus groups, the number of interviewees was reduced to three due to conflicting schedules between potential participants. The interview venues were arranged in advance with the support from the Info desk at JAMK to prevent any interruption during the interviews. The interviewees were informed about the specific time and room. The responses are to remain confidential and anonymous. The data is to be recorded by means of the recording system in smartphones providing the loud and clear sound for transcription afterwards, which is followed by a comprehensive analysis with **colour-coding** research method, discussion and conclusion.

Sampling method

It is significant to choose an appropriate sampling approach when conducting qualitative research. This chapter mainly explains non-probability sampling and describes the reasons for choosing non-probability sampling. There are two methods of sampling for a qualitative study, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling (see Figure 7).

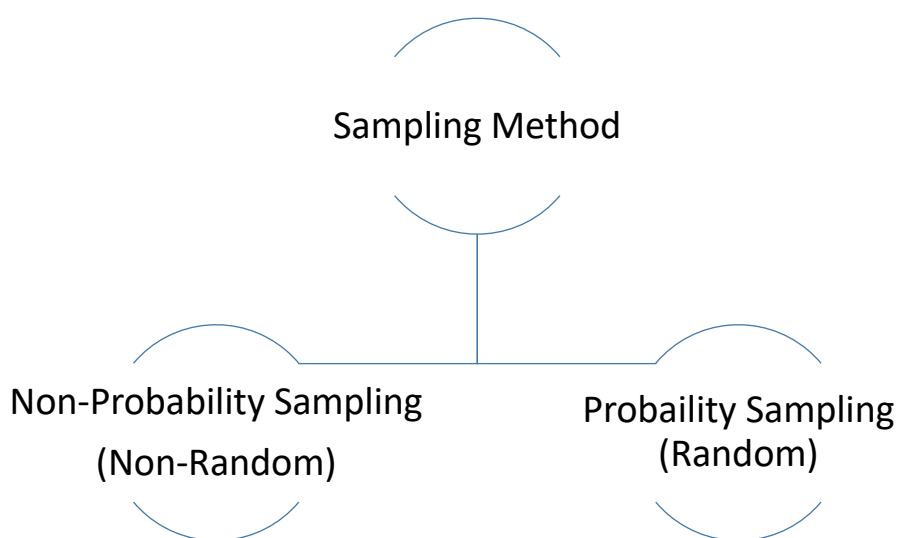


Figure 7. Types of sampling in a research

According to Dhivyadeepa (2015) defines non-probability sampling in *Sampling Techniques in Educational Research* as that: **Non-probability sampling** is a sampling technique for the selection of a group of people who are suitable to their convenience or subjective judgment in research. It cannot meet the principle of random sampling, the characteristics of non-probability sampling are the selection of samples is mainly based on the researcher's subjective judgment. (88.)

The selection of an appropriate sampling method mostly depends on the objective of research (Martin 1996, 522). This study is an exploratory study aimed at exploring group-work challenges and improvements in multicultural contexts. The purpose of the exploratory study is not predicted by the total circumstance based on the representative sample of research in statistical inference work (ibid., 522). It is obvious that the non-probability sampling method is more appropriate for this study.

Secondly, based on the small sample size of the study, the researchers use the method of the non-probability sampling method. Bernard (2006) has noted advantages and limitations of non-probability sampling methods: the non-

probabilistic study is not strictly in agreement with the principle of random sampling to taking samples; it mostly depends on researchers own convenience to taking samples and subjective judgment. There is no basis for the existence of the law of large numbers, and it is impossible to determine the sampling error of the research. Therefore, it cannot explain the extent to which the sample statistics are suitable for the overall. (ibid., 186). To a certain extent, non-probability sampling method indicates the properties and characteristics of the population. (ibid., 186).

Because the researchers consider the limited budget, time, and labor of this study, the main reason for the choice of non-probability sampling method is that, compared to the probability sampling, it is time-effective, low cost, easy access to sample members. Researchers can gather information from the respondents faster, helping researchers develop ideas and expand their thinking. Besides, the statistical analysis of the data is also simpler than the probability sampling.

Sample sizes and sample selection

This article is to study the samples of students and teachers from different cultural contexts at JAMK. On this basis, samples in this research were divided into three categories of groups, which can be classified as degree student group, exchange student group, and teacher group. To better analyse group-work in multicultural contexts, researchers try to break through the limitation of a sample selected based on previous studies related to sample selected of group-work. Samples selection are of the different level of knowledge at JAMK: they can be divided into teachers group and students group. To have a distinction among student's different learning experiences in a student group, The student group can also be categorized as degree student group and exchange student group.

To conduct the research smoothly, the researchers use a sample selection method which is participants voluntarily investigated in this research. The researchers mainly used JAMK internal mail to obtain participants, and scope

samples are from international business, logistics and education groups at JAMK. After receiving the confirmation email from the participants, the researchers used the Doodle scheduling tool to schedule the focus group interview. After carefully selecting participants, sample sizes of focus group interview is 11. Interview questions of 3 focus groups are provided as an appendix chapter at the end of this thesis (see Appendix 1, Appendix 2). Focus group interview schedule overview (see Figure 8.) is illustrated below.

Figure 8. Focus group interview schedule overview

Focus group 1	Focus group 2	Focus group 3
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Sample types	1 st year, 2 nd year and 3 rd year Degree students in International Business at JAMK	Exchange students at JAMK	Teachers at JAMK
Nationality and gender of participants	One 2 nd year Russian female: 2 nd DS_RUS(f) One 1 st year Chinese female: 1 st DS_CN(f) One 2 nd year Vietnamese female: 2 nd DS_VN(f) One 2 nd year Finnish female: 2 nd DS_FIN(f) One 3 rd year Indian male: 3 rd DS_IND(m)	One Japanese female: ES_JPN(f) One American male: ES_USA(m) One French female: ES_FRA(f)	One Finnish male: T_F(m) One American male: T_A(m) One American Female: T_A(f)
Sample sizes	5	3	3
Date	2017.03.21	2017.03.29	2017.04.05
Duration	47mins	25mins	64mins

Informed consent

The researchers must seek informed consent from participants prior before researchers conduct interviews. In obtaining informed consent, the interview can be carried out after researchers get permission. This research authorization has been approved by the Vice-rector at JAMK and also has been agreed with supervisor. Each participant in the group interviews has been clearly informed the real purpose of thesis research project, research settings, and research topics to gain explicit agreement to this research.

4.4 Validity of the results

With a view to guaranteeing the credibility of the research, it is vital that a number of criteria are taken into account regarding the qualitative research. Noble and Smith (2015, 34) highlighted the "truth value" and in the credibility of qualitative research to avoid biases and distortion and precisely provide the participants' points of view. It is essential to ensure the accuracy and transparency of the documentation in the procedure and implementation. The researcher organized three focus group discussions for degree students, exchange students and teachers to attain the objectivity in the research when the issue is considered from different angles. Frequent reflection as well as the great support from the supervisor enables the researcher to prevent possible biases and assumptions. The discussions were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere in which the participants were free to share their thoughts and opinions. The discussions were recorded by the clear smartphone sound system, which enabled appropriate data collection. Furthermore, the confidentiality is strictly ensured when the information regarding the participants remains anonymous. The topic and the instructions were clearly introduced at the beginning of group discussions to impede confusion and misunderstanding.

In addition, Shenton (2004, 64) emphasized the significance of "the adoption of research methods well established". During the on-going process, the research undertook a comprehensive and extensive review of the methodology of the research under the careful guidance of the supervisor to establish the most appropriate methods for the research. Each decision on the methodology required the researchers to provide a rational, convincing and comprehensive explanation.

Data Triangulation

"Triangulation" was mentioned as "a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies". "Data Triangulation" refers to the variety of the information sources. (Guion, Diehl and McDonald 2002, 1)

As cited in Guion and his colleagues, Thurmond (2001) regarded triangulation as effective in unraveling novel points and gaining clear insights into the topic (Guion et al. 2002, 2). This research integrated three sources of data collected from three focus group interviews with degree students, exchange students and teachers. Moreover, this primary data was combined with secondary data presented in the review of the literature. Hence, the issue undergoes a thorough and in-depth investigation from different angles and perspectives.

5 RESULTS

Regarding the analysis process, Stuckey (2017, 7) mentioned transcription as "the first step" when analysing the qualitative data. With the volume of the data collected from the three focus group discussions, the transcription work was distributed between the two researchers in which the first two interviews were transcribed by each individual and the third interview's transcription was divided equally. Hence, the working time for the transcription process was managed effectively. The researchers provided feedback to each other's transcription. To maintain the accuracy and reliability of the data. Furthermore, Widodo (2012) regarded "member checking" as an effective tool to foster the validity and trustworthiness of the data. Hence, the transcripts were provided to the participants to offer comments and advice so that the data was transcribed properly and accurately.

For the ease of reading and writing, the abbreviations to address participants are used as follows:

2nd year Russian female = 2ndDS_RUS(f),

1st year Chinese female = 1stDS_CN(f),

2nd year Vietnamese female = 2ndDS_VN(f),

2nd year Finnish female = 2ndDS_FIN(f),

3rd year Indian male = 3rdDS_IND(m),

Japanese female = ES_JPN(f),

American male = ES_USA(m),

French female = ES_FRA(f),

Finnish male = T_F(m),

American male = T_A(m),

American Female = T_A(f).

The step after transcription is coding (Stuckey 2017,1). Gibbs and Taylor (2010) defined coding as the procedures to integrate and connect the data to classify it into groups with a "code label". Marshall and Rossman (2006, 152) put an emphasis on the effectiveness of the color-coding in "defining categories for data analysis, planning further data collection, and especially for writing the final product of the research". Hence, the **color-coding** has been adopted as the analysis method for this research.

The chapter presents the key findings categorized into different themes as follows. Each theme is introduced in the main heading, and the sub-headings are displayed in bold with the support of further sub-points in the form of italics. In addition, Remarkable quotes in the focus group discussions are also included. Hence, the result section provides the findings systematically and transparently.

5.1 Traditions of group-work in different cultures

The interviewed students shared their group-work experience back home, which reflected the application of group-work in their countries. Emerging throughout the discussions were three patterns as described in Figure 9 as follows:

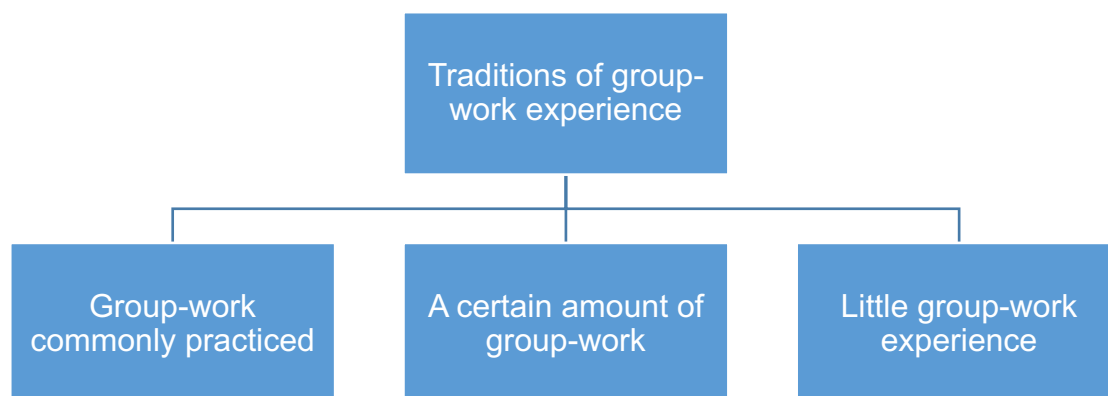


Figure 9. Traditions of group-work experience in different cultures

Group-work commonly practiced

The participants from Finland and France all mentioned that group-work is prevalent in their backgrounds. The Finnish degree student 2nd DS_FIN(f) started group-work at the first grade, which has been rising until currently. In the early stage, group-work revolves around uncomplicated topics such as presentations about cats in the third grade as a foundation for students to understand how to do group-work. At present, for her studies, group-work relates more to business. The French exchange student ES_FRA (f) also regarded group-work as frequently applied in France. Overall, they are both familiar with group-work.

A certain amount of group-work

Japanese and American exchange students stated that they have some experience of doing group-work in their home countries. For ES_JPN(f), in her teacher course, she worked in groups to give English lessons to high school or junior high school students. ES_USA(m) has also had experience with group-work. However, he regarded it as “minor” in comparison with

group-work at JAMK. On the whole, they both asserted the variance of group-work based on the kind of courses in their home institution.

Little experience in group-work

The rest of the student respondents affirmed that they almost have no experience in group-work in their own cultures. 2nd DS_RUS(f) stated the scarcity of group-work, which she considered as both positive and negative. On the one hand, with the lack of group-work, she stated, “we are not used to working in groups “. However, the favourable point, in her opinion, is the accountability they take for themselves. 2nd DS_VN(f) shared the same situation with 2nd DS_RUS(f) in which mostly individual work is regular. As noted by 3rd DS_IND(m) group-work is not included in their curriculum back home. 1st DS_CN(f) also mentioned the absence of group-work before higher education. Regarding group-work in the context of JAMK, T_A(m) witnessed that group-work does not exist in many students’ tradition of education, which means group-work at JAMK is their first experience.

5.2 Group-work experience at JAMK

This chapter focuses on exploring the students’ group-work experience when coming to JAMK. Overall, the students shared their thoughts about how they communicate in English, how they perceive deadlines and practice group-work as a new experience with the multicultural outlook. Valuable skills were also highlighted in their experience of group-work at JAMK.

Communication in English and the perception of deadlines

English is the main means of communication at JAMK, which is an international educational platform for people from different countries and backgrounds. Thus, communicating in English with group members is a new experience for both French and Japanese exchange students. Another point given by the Japanese exchange student is the difference in how people perceive deadlines. In her opinion, Asian students have more concern and faster response to deadlines than Western people.

Group-work as a new experience and the multicultural outlook at JAMK

With the variety of group-work traditions in their own cultures, student interviewees elaborated on their group-work experience when coming to JAMK. Group-work is a new experience for some students. Despite the confusion in the first year, 2nd DS_VN(f) are now more familiar with group-work. She expressed her preference for group-work over individual work in some occasions. ES_USA(m) described his feelings towards group-work at JAMK with “a bit of shock” because of the “minor” amount of group-work in his home education. As for 2nd DS_FIN(f), who stated group-work as a common practice in her education, put an emphasis on the “multicultural outlook” she obtained as a student at JAMK.

Skills learned in group-work

Group-work experience at JAMK also enables students to enhance essential skills. As noted by 1st DS_CN(f), cooperation is the skill she has learnt from her group-work at JAMK. In her opinion, it is crucial that all people’s viewpoints be taken into account and integrated. She also mentioned her experience in the Innovation week at JAMK which leveraged her cooperation skill. Another response from 2nd DS_VN(f) emphasized the communication skill she learnt in group-work at JAMK.

Furthermore, group-work skills at JAMK also play a pivotal role in students’ future careers, as 2nd DS_RUS(f) affirmed. To be more specific, 3rd DS_IND(m) highlighted the interpersonal skill which he has improved through group-work at JAMK. He emphasized the importance of group-work especially when students work in companies in the future where there will be a wide range of people of diverse skills and mindset. Furthermore, leadership is another skill that 3rd DS_IND(m) pinpointed as the future crucial skills. Being the leader of a group is of great help when students are managers in the future who needs to understand how distribution and responsibility work and work with people.

5.3 Expectations of group-work

The expectations in unsuccessful and successful group-work were also discussed in the group discussions. With reference to group-work, each individual has their own way of thinking. Thus, this chapter illustrates the interviewees' own expectations of the elements in successful and unsuccessful group-work.

Successful group-work

According to the respondents, there are a number of elements which contribute to the success of a group. Both 2nd DS_FIN(f) and ES_FRA(f) associated an effective group with the productive outcome. From the teacher's viewpoint, T_F(m) also expected the accomplishment of goals from a successful group.

Furthermore, in T_F(m)'s opinion, in an effective multicultural group, students achieve their learning outcomes and also "learn about each other". He underlined the significance of learning as a benchmark of a good group. In his view, "sometimes we do not exactly reach the goal, but we reach the purpose of learning about each other and ourselves and cultures so.. yes you can have partial success..." Similarly to his point, 3rd DS_IND(m) interpreted group-work as not "about the grades" or the evaluations but as the collaboration and solution seeking. According to him, encountering problems in a group at school instead of companies is a positive side since he regarded it as a learning outcome. Therefore, "Each group-work was good for me.", he asserted.

Besides, ES_FRA(f) emphasized the good communication as the indispensable component of a good group, which was in line with ES_USA(m)'s viewpoint. Moreover, ES_USA(m) pinpointed the frequent meetings and contribution from all members as regards a good group. Collaboration is of importance to the effectiveness of group-work, both ES_JPN(f) and 2nd DS_FIN(f) affirmed. 2nd DS_FIN(f)'s expectation in a good

group is the multicultural environment where international students exchange their viewpoints.

Unsuccessful group-work

Regarding the expectation in an unsuccessful group, the final result and goals were mentioned. For ES_FRA(f), an ineffective group means the group does not achieve the outcome. 1st DS_CN(f) stated the difference in people's goals which makes the group-work ineffective. For example, some members would like to achieve the perfect outcome while others aim to gain the passing point. In the teacher's opinion, T_F(m) also emphasized the failure of goals and even the lack of learning outcomes as the sign of the unsuccessful group-work.

All three teachers agreed with the learning aspect in a multicultural group. For example, T_A(f) did not associate a successful group with everything going well but "the different clashes or challenges" in multicultural group-work are "one of the beauties of multicultural projects" which stimulate students to look at the issues from various angles. For T_A(m), he would love to see students encounter problems in multicultural group-work which "create learning opportunities" when students learn how to handle them. Additionally, 3rd DS_IND(m) also elaborated on the learning aspect in group-work. In his opinion, experiencing bad group-work enables students to learn not to do the wrong things, which encourages improvements later.

The issues with communication also have a role to play according to the respondents. The Finnish degree student mentioned the absence of communication in group-work. "They don't ask for help if they don't know what they are doing", she claimed. More specifically, as noted by the Vietnamese degree students, communication problems also lie in the lack of listening skills

and the group domination in which one thinks they are right and expect others to follow their own way.

Additionally, an ineffective group-work, as stated by 2nd DS_ FIN(f), involves the language barriers: “when I’m trying to explain problems in English it’s a lot harder than I would do it in Finnish cause I am not sure how should I express myself.” In the same viewpoint, 2nd DS_RUS(f) stated, “perhaps it would be even harder for me to know express myself, and in some conflicts situation, in a bad way I would rather make it like super polite but straight forward”.

In addition, the American exchange student showed his concern over students’ attitude in his group-work experience at JAMK, which he described: “it seems more laidback”. The problems with thinking and free riders were also regarded as elements of an ineffective group according to ES_JPN(f) and 2nd DS_ RUS(f) respectively.

Expectations of group forming

Group forming is one of the emerging themes in the group discussions. The students and teachers presented their viewpoints about how groups should be formed. The overall opinion is that teachers should select groups for students.

ES_USA(m) shared that in his home institutions, teachers usually decide the group members. He is in accordance with this type of group forming because when students do not choose the people they are familiar with, they have the opportunity to “meet new people and get outside of the comfort zone”.

2nd DS_FIN(f) stated that people are more likely to choose people they know or prefer to follow the good leader for a successful outcome. To her mind, multicultural group-work enriches students’ experience. Therefore, although she likes working with her familiar friends, she also stressed the benefits of teachers dividing the group. Thus, she was in favour of teachers choosing group members to provide chances to interact with new cultures. Likewise, 2nd DS_VN(f) expressed her tendency to find members who she often speaks with since she feels most comfortable. However, she would like to gain new

experience with group forming by teachers. From the same viewpoint, 2nd DS_RUS(f) favoured teacher's decisions on group members because in the future working life, it is unlikely that people can select their group members.

In 3rd DS_IND(m)'s experience, in one class, the teacher first asked students to form groups themselves. The result was that students mostly chose their members of the same nationality. He arranged the group again by giving numbers in order to mix students into different groups with different members. People have a tendency to select people with the same culture since they have the same language together, similar interaction and expect the way to do group-work. According to him, teachers should help students to be in a mixed group, which enables them not only to learn about the assignment but also about how to work in a group.

5.4 Cultural impacts on group-work

The objective of this section is to present the key points related to the theme of cultural impacts in group-work. The chapter consists of five headings including "Changes in the ways of people behaviours", "Bringing reflection of people own culture into situation", and "Argument point". The last part of this section is "Argument point", which is aimed to present one argument point related to the theme of cultural impacts debated by degree student participants in the degree student discussion.

Changes in the way of people behaviors

According to participants discussions about cultural impacts regarding changes in the way of people behaviors in group-work in three focus groups, students' behaviors have been affected by working with other cultures. These changes can also be divided into five key points: speaking way changes, thinking way changes, and action changes.

Speaking way changes: According to the 2ndDS_FIN(f)'s statements, working with people from different countries in a group helped her become more confident to directly speak her ideas out to others, even though she is

from a non-English speaking country. Compared to 2ndDS_FIN(f), both 2ndDS_VN(f) and 3rdDS_IND(m) emphasized the importance of expressing ideas in tactful or indirect ways instead of speaking straight forward in their cultures. Both students stated that it might be not good speaking directly so that they are used to expressing their opinions in an indirect way. 2ndDS_VN(f) students also stressed that she took whole group atmosphere and individuals feelings into account; she explained that it is not about whether her answers are correct or not, but it might affect the whole atmosphere of the group and the individual emotions of the group members. She described the way that she deal with her case is to make a compromise between different ideas among group members.

Thinking way changes: Two students ES_JPN(f) and 2ndDS_FIN(f) mentioned the different way of thinking about things depending on what culture is. ES_JPN(f) student stated that Asian students at JAMK seem to be more worried about the deadlines for group tasks, compared to European students. The other 2ndDS_FIN(f) student expressed her views on the behaviours changes made by foreign students who came to JAMK. She believes that some foreign students tend to act like Finnish people after coming to Finland. The reason that she gave for it is that those students are in the context of Finland, and they know how the Finnish school system works so that they have to be punctual or speak straight forward like Finish people.

Treat people from different cultures: Teachers and students had an awareness of treating people from different cultures differently. According to the statement of 2ndDS_FIN(f), she is used to be in the context of Finland. When she worked with people from other countries, she found it is hard for her to compromise other opinions or adjust herself to a new group environment. 2ndDS_VN(f) and 3rdDS_IND(m) emphasized they still try to be used to dealing people with differently when they have multicultural group-work. 2ndDS_RUS(f) student expressed her the concern of how to treat people from different countries in a group. The T_A(f) that the students need to have different

treatment about people from different cultures, and deal with those people with different perspectives that is a part of group-work.

Learn from cultures: Students showed a great interest in working with different cultures in multicultural group-work. One of them ES_USA(m) explained the reason that he can observe how other cultures work in that situation, which makes him feel pretty interested. Two teachers T_F(m) and T_A(f) also thought that the purpose of group-work is to learn about each other, themselves and cultures. T_A(f) stated the fact that students might see different points and view in group learning, and then they go through them, learn from each other. T_F(m) supported her view that in the schooling environment group members learn something about each other, themselves as well as different cultures, all that happens in multicultural environments.

Meet new people, new culture: Exchange students believe that group-work in a multicultural context can break the current situation and meet new people and new cultures.

Bringing reflection of people own culture into group-work

According to teachers' observation to students, students bring their reflection of their own culture into group-work studies at JAMK. The difference of student action and attitude towards group-work reflects their own university cultures and educational background cultures.

Bring own university cultures into group-work: A teacher T_F(m) found that students bring their own university cultures unconsciously to the existing group-work projects at JAMK. He used two different examples to explain this situation. Some students gave great emphasis to the results of group-work, and then they set high standards for themselves. They did excellent work in group-work project, and everything has to be done the high level in projects. He gave a reason for it is that the competition back home is huge, and those students are used to doing a great job. On the other hand, T_F(m) also gave another example. Some students who see those hardworking students for the first time in their studies, and they might drop their own demand level to a

minimum so that they do not do their jobs. He gave a clear explanation of students bringing their own cultural backgrounds into group-work:

They bring their own situation and their reflection of their own culture. Sometimes it can be that they do exactly as they do back home or they do just the opposite of what they do at home. (T_F(m).)

Do-no-help-you culture: Some of the students in multicultural group-work have do-not-help-you culture, which is derived from their own education system and grading system in their back home. A teacher T_F(m) took his exchange student as an example, the grading system in this exchange student's country is that only five per cent of course participants can get the highest grade. If students are good in a class, they will not consider helping other people get good grades, because these people might be better than you. There is limited amount high grades that teachers will give in this country. At JAMK, the teachers can give the highest grade to everyone. These students who come from highly-competitive or do-not-help-you culture will not be easy to help others in the multicultural group-work. The statement by T_F(m) about do-not-help-you culture is present below:

So it's not only about the national. it's the educational system and even the grading system that teach you how to act. (T_F(m).)

Fairness in group-work: Teachers are awareness of fairness and equity in group-work. T_A(m) gave his cultural perspective towards equity in group-work, group-work should be fair, but teachers do not have to always fix everything along the way or correct student's behavior in group-work.

Group-work dynamics: Teachers observed the students from different countries have a had a big impact on the group dynamics. T_A(m) stated that group-work dynamic should be separated from the individuals in group-work.

Each of the individuals can help each other own personal ways of responding to conflicts in group-work.

Argument point in the degree student discussion for cultural impacts

In the degree student focus group discussion, researchers noticed that the point of "positive side and negative side of multicultural group-work" in one of the given questions were being widely debated by the degree students participants. 2ndDS_RUS(f) expressed her view about this point is that the "negative side" of group-work is not a challenge. She believes that the group is multicultural, which is not challenge, the challenge may come from the group itself. She thought that the description of the word: "negative side" or "bad thing" is not appropriate to describe the point of "the group is multicultural". Similarly, 2ndDS_FIN(f) student also stressed that whether the group is mono-cultural or multicultural, those two types of the group could be the same challenges. She stated her opinions that those challenges depend on "culture itself " rather than "individuals". Challenges inside group-work are to teach students to learn from challenges, difficulties. This is 2ndDS_VN(f)'s point of view. She emphasized the learning purpose of the group-work. Those challenges related to multicultural group-work result in positive result instead of negative one that students never want to work in a group anymore (2ndDS_VN(f)).

5.5 Challenges in group-work

This chapter is to present findings of the theme of "challenges" in group-work. The theme of "Challenges" is divided into four different headings to show the results. The headings related to "Challenges" are in the type of bold, and the key points and key words related to the heading are all in the type of bold and italics. Some wonderful speeches are listed in the form of the original statement.

Communication problems

In the three focus group interviews, communication issues were usually mentioned by participants. Researchers gathered a lot of findings of the communication problems of group-work. Those problems will be categorized into different themes to present.

Speaking straight forward: In some cultures, people are usually not good at expressing their opinions and feelings directly in some instances. In the process of group-work, they usually tend to speak their opinions out as tactfully as possible or express themselves in a super polite way. The participant 3rdDS_IND(m) gave an example that it might be not good speaking straight forward in some countries and that rarely conflicts start in the first place. The 2ndDS_FIN(f) also responded to this case by explaining that people in the Finnish context, some of them expect that when foreigners come to Finland, they start acting like Finnish people, and speak what they think straight forward, which can be a challenge.

No communication: Three-degree student participants: 2ndDS_FIN(f), 2ndDS_FIN(f) and 2ndDS_VN(f) answered questions related to challenges that they met in group-work in the multicultural context, three of them all emphasized that members conducting group-work without any communication in a group are also challenging for group-work study. The common opinions from these three participants seem to be that there is no communication, a member does not listen to other members or even reject other members' opinions. Both 2ndDS_FIN(f) and 2ndDS_FIN(f) degree students described the fact that some group members sometimes are doing things on their own; they are not willing to discuss with other group members and ask for help even if they do not know what they are supposed to do. Another 2ndDS_VN(f) also agreed with 2ndDS_FIN(f) and 2ndDS_FIN(f) that some bad groups caused by coordination among individuals is not effective. Meanwhile, the 2ndDS_VN(f) further illustrated her point, the reasons for the lack of cooperation in a group are mainly because a lack of cooperation between the individuals of the group, some members do not want to listen to or even reject the views of others. Therefore, the group goes to two different directions, which can be a challenge.

Languages issues: The problem of language is the participants from both degree student group and exchange student group the most concern. Five participants from the degree student focus group all agreed that language communication is the major issue facing in their first year of JAMK. Firstly, misunderstanding has been shown in group-work. The 1stDS_CN(f) described that she did not know how to describe her ideas when she had a point of view. For example, sometimes she tried to express her opinions when conducting group-work, but other group members did not what she meant. The ES_FRA(f) firstly emphasized that English is quite difficult for her as well. Lack of English skills is a primary problem. Both participants 2ndDS_FIN(f) and 2ndDS_RUS(f) stated the main emphasis on the way to express themselves in English in group-work. The 2ndDS_FIN(f) elaborated that expressing themselves is a lot harder than she would do it in Finnish. Especially when someone has a lot of emotions in language, for example, in some conflicts situations, it will make it more super polite (2ndDS_RUS(f)).

English is also much harder for ES_JPN(f), the participant noticed the difference between English and Japanese, but the statement of emphasis is on own pleasant individual experiences and study feelings in group-work.

The following statements made by participants in student focus group discussions, these statements are related to language problems in group-work.

Sometimes when I describe to someone about my idea, but they cannot understand about my idea (1stDS_CN(f)).

English for me (ES_FRA(f)).

Well, have you had any problems with expressing yourselves in English (2ndDS_FIN(f)).

Especially cause I have a lot of emotions in your language well, it depends I am pretty much used to using in a way

sophisticated English, so perhaps it would be even harder for me to know express myself. (2ndDS_RUS(f).)

In my view, it may be a bit hard for Japanese people to get what other group members are trying to say to those people, but I know the differences between those two languages so I don't get stressed or like feeling ignored or those negative feelings. (ES_JPN(f).)

A group sometimes is divided by teachers at JAMK, and group members also have group mates from other countries. The 3rdDS_IND(m) emphasised that although language problems arise in some groups at the beginning, they can solve it and is not a big problem.

On the other hand, from the ES_USA(m)'s perspective, the problem of language issues also occur, particularly compared to those participants who are not from English-speaking countries. The point raised by ES_USA(m) is mainly to take his English speaking speed during group-work into account and need to clarify what other members say in group-work. Organization and coordination of groups often are done by the ES_USA(m), he explained that other members he can do because of he is a native speaker.

The following tree diagram (see Figure 10.) are specific problems related to language issues, which were mentioned in focus group discussions. It can be seen that those language problems mainly focus on three aspects, which are Describing ideas and Misunderstanding, Lack of English skills, and Clarifying the others' points.

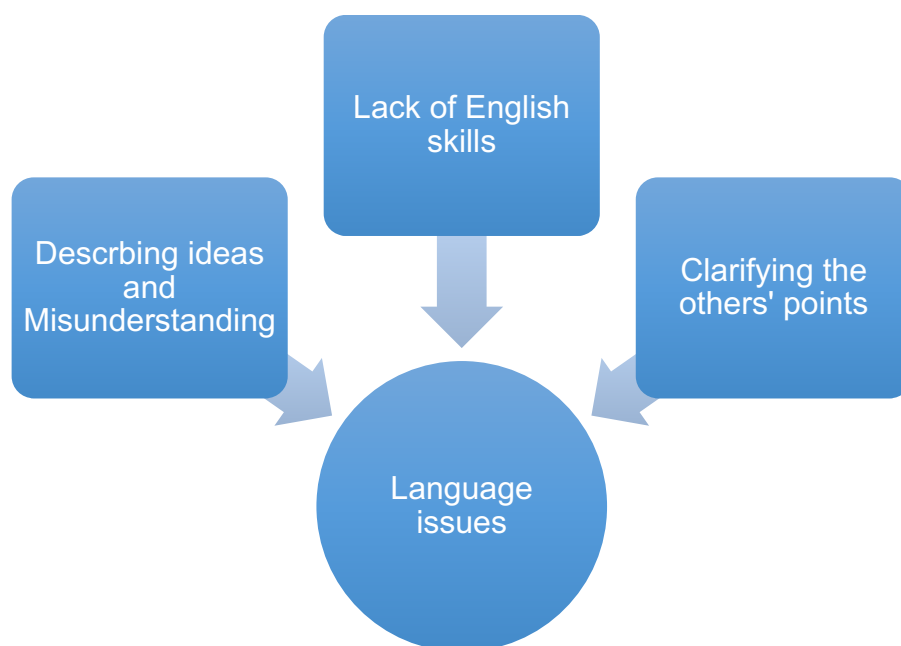


Figure 10. Three aspects of language issues.

Contact challenges outside class: According to the comparison of the differences regarding contact challenges outside class between degree student group and exchange student group, researchers found that, compared to degree student group, exchange students had difficulties in contact at JAMK when working with a group. Three exchange participants: ES_JPN(f), ES_USA(m) and ES_FRA(f) all stated that they have some challenges in contacting with group members after the class. The statement of contact challenges by ES_JPN(f) is that :

I think compared to degree students; we have different situations. I just found it kinda surprising and challenging to contact each other outside the classroom cause I thought everyone is reading the email and looking at Optima all the time for the courses.

(ES_JPN(f).)

It is difficult to get in touch with group members assigned tasks outside class. The fact is that some students do not often check school email after the class (ES_USA(m)). The majority of communication channels after class among students at JAMK are mainly based on Optima teaching system and school internal e-mail. ES_USA(m) claimed his view that communication with group members by using school mail is more professional form, usually used with teachers. At JAMK, school e-mail is often used to contact with students, sometimes it might be no reply (ES_USA(m)). The ES_JPN(f) participant supported the ES_USA(m)'s opinion towards not checking school e-mails often that some students back home do not have a Facebook account, and not used to contacting others by e-mail. Students at JAMK are using school mail and Facebook to communicate with each other; it is challenging for those who are not used to using these contact ways. Besides, the ES_USA(m) participant described another situation is that some group members have been accustomed to waiting for other ones to contact them; those members waiting for others are into a passive state in group-work. Moreover, it is the hardest part of starting a group to get everyone together. When a group is created, it takes the time to get everyone as a friend to create a group on Facebook outside class (ES_USA(m)), and some of them might not use real names on Facebook (ES_JPN(f)).

Challenges at group forming stage

In this section, participants show different points of view related to group forming. In focus group discussions, how to choose a group and division of neighbour issue can be seen as below.

The decisions of group selection: In the two groups of students focus group discussion, how to select the group is also a hot topic. Participants stated the students would be given freedom in deciding or forming their own groups (2ndDS_RUS(f)). Typically, there are two ways of forming students groups: one

way is that students create by their own, and the other one is that teachers of courses help them with it. Participants from two student groups had different views towards decisions of group selection. When students decided to form their own groups, they usually tend to stick to their friends and stick to those people who you know lead a group-work to a good result. The 2ndDS_RUS(f) participant gave an example by explaining that some members stick to the leader of a group. However, she also emphasized that the working with friends does not provide any new experiences and nothing new comes, and in such case group members are more likely only to choose the easiest tasks because they rely on leaders or their friends. According to the 3rdDS_IND(m), for the first semester of exchange students, the group forming is primarily based on the nationalities. What he explained to this situation is that:

They will form with nationality because of the culture, because they know how to interact their own culture, they free interacting each other (3rdDS_IND(m)).

The 3rdDS_IND(m) participant also would choose for the teacher to divide the group, and he pointed out that mainly group-work is only the burden of one rather than all of them. The 2ndDS_VN(f) participant is also inclined to teacher help students with a group forming so that students can have more new experiences in working with different people, even if working with friends will be more comfortable.

Division of neighbour: There are three participants: ES_USA(m), ES_FRA(f), and T_A(f) from the exchange focus group and the teacher focus group are talking about the issue of division of neighbour in group-work. Through the similar description of experiences of group members selection by the two participants ES_USA(m) and ES_FRA(f), they get used to choosing group members back home when they have a group-work, which could be good or bad because they work with friends. They raised the view that the key point of choosing exchange programme at JAMK is to break them up and try to meet new people they know to get outside of the comfort zone.

Challenges at group storming stage

This section of the chapter mainly focuses on challenges that participants raised in group discussions. Leadership problem, interpersonal conflict of group members, the differences between individuals personalities, members' expectations of the group, and the goals achievements for the group will be present below.

Leadership: The 2ndDS_VN(f), 3rdDS_IND(m), and 2ndDS_RUS(f) had different opinions on the role of the leader in a group. The first is the challenge of the differences in leadership styles in a group. One is determined by the leader behaviours differences in a group (2ndDS_VN(f)), and the other one depends upon the types of leader personality (3rdDS_IND(m)). According to the descriptions by the 2ndDS_VN(f) and the 3rdDS_IND(m), some group leaders only did what they think is right and expected that other members of the group could accept their views. They expressed their views and then did not ask or listened to the rest of members' opinions. Under this case, some members had to cancel the idea of being a leader in a group even if they never tasted it. On the other hand, there are many different types of personality in the group, the 3rdDS_IND(m) described it by giving an example, some leader had a strong personality; their speaking is in a very dominating way so that they tend to lead a group in a control method. In this way, the group leader assigns the tasks to members, the other members only follow it. The 3rdDS_IND(m) emphasized the importance of people in such that they could learn about people and different types of leadership, knowing how to deal with this situation in the future career.

Followed by the leadership ability is used in the future career path. According to 2ndDS_RUS(f), she supported the view that people can learn at the moment about what is good or bad in a group, but she also emphasised that it cannot guarantee that people will know how to lead a good team in the future.

Personality issues: After groups forming, the personality characteristics of the individuals unconsciously come into focus for a group with the increase of

communication among group members. Some clashes in group-work caused by different personalities may emerge. In the three focus group discussions, four participants: T_F(m), 3rdDS_IND(m), T_A(m), and 2ndDS_FIN(f) listed the three typical personalities of group members in group-work.

The first type of person is who are very outgoing and talkative in a group. The participant, T_F(m) further explained the reason for it by taking an example, the person who is active and talkative wants some conversations with other members to exchange views and points, but it might be hard for some people to respond to them, especially in the context of multi-culture. He described that: " I have got an idea, but they did not listen to me."

The second type of personality is a person who has a strong personality in a group. The two participants: the 3rdDS_IND(m) and the 2ndDS_FIN(f), stated that some members of the group have strong personalities. One participant stated the fact that in the first year at JAMK, when the group had a person with a strong personality, the group members listened to them, and members remained in the passive state. The 3rdDS_IND(m) participant also took a strong personality into account in a group discussion, 3rdDS_IND(m) described it as that people in a group "were dominating". Compared to the first year, those who have strong personalities have changed in the sophomore year, 2ndDS_FIN(f) made a statement that:

The second year it has been a lot easier to get along with people and those who have been the strong personalities have also learnt to ask others' opinions and show that they also value group members (2ndDS_FIN(f)).

The third one is shyness. 2ndDS_FIN(f) and T_A(m) jointly referred to a personal characteristic, such as the shyness (2ndDS_FIN(f)), which drives some people do not actively communicate with others and feel shy to express their views in the group. That could lead to misunderstanding of other members and people think that those shy people don't want to work with them. (2ndDS_FIN(f).)

Group-work expectations: The expectations and goals setting of the group-work vary from person to person. Firstly, 1stDS_CN(f) stressed the fact that some people want to do a good job in group-work, whereas others regard group-work as a means of only passing the courses. According to the statements of the teachers, teachers seem to be aware of knowing what suspecting of students, and students' expectations in group-work.

In teacher T_A(m)'s a point of view, some students may be brave enough to ask questions, whereas some of them just let it go. He T_A(m) moreover elaborated that this might be due to the fact that some students bring their behaviors back home into the new environment. Those students are not used to approaching teachers in their countries, and they do not have much group-work so that they do not need to approach teachers. Group-work is a new thing for plenty students at JAMK. From teachers points of view, students at JAMK seem to pay a lot of attention to try to understand the "instructions of expectations of teacher" (T_A(m)). An example that was taken by T_F(m) is that some students are afraid of accepting an open-ended task at JAMK. He elaborated it by explaining that students are accustomed to accepting very detailed questions given by their teachers back home and then their expectations for those questions are only to have correcting answers. He thought that it might be the reason why students are not confident to start on such tasks after coming to JAMK.

T_A(f) emphasized the importance of group learning expectations of teachers; They are interested in students' thinking such as what is challenging, and what is difficult rather than knowing they know right answers. The role of teachers at JAMK is that they do not necessarily follow the progress of each group closely in the group, the following statements made by a teacher (T_A(m)) to show the group-work expectation:

*I think there is an expectation here that from teachers
that the students were independently even if it is a group*

project, the group member works independently (T_A(m)).

We might give a group-work an assignment than just expect that the students will perform more independent way together and that everything would go fine (T_A(m)).

Contribution of each member: Both 2ndDS_RUS(f) and 2ndDS_VN(f) participants mentioned the challenges that they meet in group-work are free riders. They emphasized those free riders can get a high grade without doing anything. 2ndDS_VN(f) stated that other group members were usually considering whether they should tell to the teacher or not by voting. A teacher T_A(m) also stated the fact that some projects have been completed only to find out that there were problems with vary level participation by certain participants

Scheduling: In focus group discussions, teachers and students from exchange and degree student group found that the time scheduling can be a challenge for group-work. ES_USA(m) described that the most difficult thing in group-work could be that he try to get everyone on the same pages and find time to fit everyone. In his cultural background, he is used to being on his own individual work. He emphasized that he has to be more patient to time scheduling. According to T_A(m), he made a statement to those students who have challenges with scheduling in group-work:

For example, they had a work because they do not have kind of financial support, so they have to work and that kind of thinking in fear with your ability to participate fully and all of these group-work situations (T_A(m)).

Other problems

This section is to illustrate other problems emerging in group-work, including academic integrity, difficulties in treating people from different countries differently.

Academic integrity: The teachers also concerned about the academic integrity of the students in group-work. The teacher T_F(m) has made it clear that academic plagiarism is not acceptable anywhere. T_A(m) stressed that a major problem of academic integrity is reflected in ethics.

Difficulties in treating people from different countries: Degree students were aware of the importance of treating people from different cultural backgrounds in group-work. They all concerned about the ways of treating people from different cultures. 3rdDS_IND(m) emphasized people do not always know how to deal with it. The statement of difficulties in treating people from different countries differently made by 3rdDS_IND(m) is that

So it is about your culture you come from that how you treat people. That's a big problem. (3rdDS_IND(m).)

5.6 Handling group-work challenges

After discussing the challenges in group-work, this chapter presents how to deal with challenges in group-work. The research is to provide an investigation of the improvements in the face of challenges from both students and teachers' angles to gain insights into the topic deeply and thoroughly.

Students' perspective

The students shared the reactions to challenges in their previous experiences. Furthermore, they also provided a number of tips on dealing with group-work challenges.

Responses to challenges in the previous experiences: According to 2nd DS_FIN(f) and 2nd DS_RUS(f), in their previous experiences, it varied regarding how teachers tackled challenges in group-work. From their

perspectives, in some courses teachers were very supportive while in others, they noticed that teachers did not care about what was happening in the group. 2nd DS_RUS(f) stated that in some groups, there was no reminder about how to do group-work. She felt that the teachers expected students to know what to do. However, in her view, in that case, if students asked for help from teachers, some offered help while some ignored that.

In another 2nd DS_RUS(f)'s experience, her group members were willing to discuss the problems within the group ,and they figured out the solution together. ES_USA(m) underscored the importance of clear expectation of group-work from teachers at JAMK. In his home institution, a specific period in class was allocated for group-work, which he found helpful to gather everyone for discussions.

In the face of free rider problem specifically, 2nd DS_VN(f) shared her experience about one of her groups in which there was a free rider. Her group had a discussion as to whether they should report this issue to the teacher. In the end, they made a decision that they would not.

Tackling challenges: 2nd DS_IND(m) and 2nd DS_RUS(f) attached great significance to teachers' guidance and support in face of challenges. 2nd DS_IND(m) suggested that teachers provide students with instructions on how to do group-work. 2nd DS_RUS(f) proposed that students should never be ignored. She acknowledged that there might not be a need to ask for help from teachers in the second year or third year because of students' capabilities of handling the issues on their own. Nevertheless, she stated her concern over the issue: "Perhaps the problem or the issue or the challenge has reached the point where it needs an external help, so when in that case, the teacher acts like he or she doesn't care or it's not able to help well". From her perspective, teachers can offer support with simple questions such as "how do you like the course, how it is going with your group-work, how is your group-work, how is the progress,..."

Both ES_JPN(f) and ES_USA(m) suggested a specific time allocated for group-work within the class with a view to gaining contacts with all group members. It is also essential for students to check emails more frequently. Furthermore, ES_USA(m) emphasized the importance of patience, adaptability and listening skills in improvements to group-work.

Teachers' perspective

From the teachers' perspective, in the face of challenges, they underlined "discussion", the "client-based approach", introduced "Bathtub's theory" and "Tuckman's theory". A number of notes were also presented regarding "conflict style".

Sharing the same point with 2nd DS_RUS(f), T_A(f) also proposed discussion between teachers and students as one way to handle issues. Nevertheless, she stated her concerns: "I think they see that at JAMK it is possible to talk with teachers but like students said some maybe don't dare..."

T_A(m) highlighted the "client-based approach". Group-work is regarded as a product delivered to a client. The client does not pay attention to the issues arising in the group but the ultimate goal. "That's how it works in business you know. Clients don't get involved in problems unless it's a catastrophe and they may not meet the deadline", he asserted. In other words, T_A(f) put an emphasis on the learning points of the group in the case of problems. He does not want to be a mediator who examines who makes the group unproductive or makes mistakes, which he thinks is not helpful. He assesses the group based on the final group result. "I just don't want my role to be somebody who has to fix all these problems. I like that the problems are there", he stated. It is these problems that create learning opportunities for students. T_F(m) shared the same philosophy with T_A(m) that in spite of not actively intervening in the group, he is available for support when problems arise.

Bathtub's theory: T_F(m) presented another model of management called "Bathtub":

*The idea is that I'm like a man sitting in the bathroom.
I see the bathtub. I see both edges, I see the start of the project.
I see the end. And the project team is somewhere there taking
the bath...I cannot be all the time available. All of my teams are
doing in all aspects. I got the philosophy: they know where I am.
I see some good things and bad things because they are creating
waves and bubbles and I see the end. (T_F(m).)*

Overall, as he explained, the “Bathtub model” indicates the role of teachers who observe the process of a group. Teachers do not actively interfere with the group but offer support if needed.

Tuckman’s theory: Both T_F(m) and T_A(m) introduced Tuckman’s model: “forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning”. T_F(m) stated that some groups “just waited until they just had to start doing and maybe the problems never got really a solution other than they realized they had to get something done.” T_A(m) witnessed “occasionally groups will come to a point as forming, storming, norming, performing where they spend way too much time in this storming phase, and norming takes a long time.”

Conflict style: T_A(m) affirmed that the conflict style is connected with the way students handle group-work challenges. There are variations in group behaviour. “The group dynamic is the sum total of the individuals, but each of the individuals can help their own personal ways of responding to conflict”, he stated. Some students have a tendency to be passive while other students are straight to the point and they are willing to voice their opinions.

Dealing with the free-rider challenge

In the face of the free-rider challenge, the teachers emphasized the importance of clear expectation, included individual tasks, reflection methods and gave deeper insights into the free-riding problem as well as some remarks over high-performs in group-work.

Clear expectation and individual tasks included: According to T_F(m), a clear expectation should be formed in advance that “free-riders will be spotted”. The teachers provided in the group discussion the other methods revolving around refection. As regards free-rider problem, T_A(f) proposed to include individual tasks in the course content besides group-work. Hence, “they have to do something, and it’s not only one grade for everyone”.

Reflection approach: The approach which T_F(m) adopts is “peer evaluation”, which he informs students in advance to leverage independence and support between group members. In his view, there need to be questions about who contribute most to the group since it is unfair to only figure out the wrongdoer. “Reflective assessment tool” was underlined by both T_A(m) and T_A(f) in which students “can reflect on anything that happened in the project”. In T_A(f)’s opinion, she is interested in students’ thinking and the challenges and difficulties they are fraught with. T_A(m) also mentioned “debrief” as a strategy to create students the opportunities for reflection on the tasks they have completed.

Regarding this reflection approach, teachers also emphasized some notable points which need to be taken into consideration. According to T_A(m), this reflection requires bravery since in the US for example, “there is this idea that you don’t rat on people”. He expressed his worry that the reflection tool will enable people to find faults or blame on the others. Furthermore, group assignments are usually finished at the end of the semester when people are occupied, or they have already left for jobs in summer. T_A(m) also put an emphasis on the significance of fairness. There should be uniformity and consistency in the way teachers practice the approach.

Deeper insights into the free-riding problem: T_A(m) regarded the free-rider problem as students’ learning journey. They need “to learn failure, experience it and taste it”. From his angle, these experiences are of importance to them. The free-rider problem requires “maturity and understanding”, according to T_F(m), in the case that some students think that they will not fail because they contribute less if they obtain the same result as

a whole group. From T_A(m)'s perspective, people who run on others will be affected and "keep them up at night".

Teachers shared deeper thoughts over the word "free-riding" itself. T_A(m) interpreted the word "free-riding" as "judgmental and loaded", which refers to the lack of "empathetic understanding". Furthermore, as stated by T_F(m), if people are given insignificant tasks due to the fact that their capabilities are not highly valued by the group, they might be "labelled as the free riders...We all have top performers and free-riders and nothing in the middle."

High performers and free-riders: T_F(m) stated that students may be more alert to the "free-riders" and disregard the high performers. According to him, the fairness is not only about finding the one with faults but also acknowledging the top performers. He is willing to give credits to those making endeavours and performing excellently. Nevertheless, he noted the other side of the coin. If there is an announcement beforehand about the rewards for outstanding performers, the group can be more competitive, which may pose threats to the group. In response, T_A(m) suggested that it lays the foundation for students for preparation in the future competitive working life.

Coping with the communication challenge

To handle the communication challenge, the teachers put an emphasis on the scheduled contact lessons and learning opportunities from this challenge. Furthermore, they also highlighted the role of teachers in tackling the communication challenge.

With respect to communication challenges, "scheduled contact lessons" are the approach T_A(f) presented. Her viewpoint is in line with ES_JPN(f) and ES_USA(m)'s opinions. In these lessons, members have physical contact with the others in the group. Thus, students can have face to face discussions and clarify the tasks. Nonetheless, she stated, "Not all of them take advantage of that."

T_A(m) employed the “strong experiential learning element” in his teaching method. He gave a prominence to learning by experience. Hence, the communication issues are “not bad things” in his view. If “a complete guidance” is offered to the group step by step, according to him, it is to “instruct them”. Encountering the challenges in group-work, students undergo a transformation with time and realize greater achievements in the end.

T_F(m) is in agreement with T_A(m) on this point. For example, if students in the multicultural group stick with people they are familiar with, there may be no communication problems. However, in that case, students have no learning outcomes. In the real working life, people are unlikely to choose their own group with a specific means of communication. Thus, communication problems are better to encounter at school rather than in the future work for the first time. This gives students experience and learning outcomes. Hence, the role of teachers, as he emphasized, is to be available but not to prevent students from learning in group-work.

6 DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a comprehensive and in-depth interpretation of the main results with the reflection upon the literature review and other sources in the research topic. New emerging themes are to be discussed, which is followed by practical implications.

6.1 Main findings

The main objective of this current study was to explore how to cope with the group-work challenges in a multicultural context and to have an overview of the recommendations in multicultural group-work to enhance students group-work abilities through studying the challenges and exploring the improvements in multicultural group-work. Therefore, it can be seen that the study results have the important practice instruction significance and guidance significance to deal with challenges in the future work and study.

The main research question of this study is: what are strategies to respond to group-work challenges in multicultural context at a higher education? Under the main research question devised, three sub-questions were determined: the first question is: what are the traditions of group-work back home for higher education students? The second question is: what are the cultural impacts on group-work at JAMK? How should teachers and students cope with group-work challenges at JAMK? is the last sub-question to be explored.

The key results of the research are to be presented and discussed in the light of literature. These results are categorized into different aspects which provide opportunities for comprehensive and in-depth interpretation.

Traditions

On the whole, there is a variety of degrees to which the participants practice group-work back in their countries, ranging from frequent to little experience. Bringing along their own traditions of group-work in their cultures, students come to JAMK and have different interpretations of group-work experience in JAMK. In general, they have all attained new learning outcomes, especially the valuable skills in group-work and multicultural outlook when doing group-work in JAMK.

The Finnish second-year degree student regarded group-work as the common practice in Finnish education, which is in line with Ribeiro and colleagues who asserted that group-work is adopted as one of the most widespread approaches in Finnish education (Ribeiro et al. 2015, 64). This finding is also supported by the Practically-oriented Bachelor's Degrees in Finland (2016, 1). With her familiarity with group-work, studying in JAMK provides her with a more multicultural outlook when working with international groups. The French participant also confirmed her frequent practice with group-work in France and emphasized the communication in English with group members as the highlight of her group experience at JAMK.

Regarding the participants who claimed to have a certain amount of group-work in their home countries, they also shared their new aspects of group-work experience when coming to JAMK. The Japanese exchange student affirmed that she has had some experience of doing group-work in Japan. This is consistent with Shin, Postiglione and Huang (2015, 171) who depicted the students' responses demonstrating that group-work is not a widespread approach in Japan. The American exchange student affirmed his experience in the US with group-work is "minor" in comparison with group-work at JAMK. This contradicts the claims of Xue (2013, 1) emphasizing the prevalence of group-work the remarkable feature in the US education and Redden (2006) who pinpointed that group-work is the typical practice in an American class. A possible explanation is that there might be variations in a specific context, as stated by Cimasko, Paiz, and Gherwash (2013).

For the participants coming from Russia, India, China and Viet Nam, they asserted their little experience in group-work back home. This is consistent with Sinelnikov and Hastie (2008, 203) who mentioned that there is a shortage of group-work for Russian students. Likewise, Ryan (2011) stated the individual work as primary for the students from China. The Vietnamese participant also regarded individual tasks as the common practice in her education back home, which is not in line with Pham (2011, 3) highlighting that the transformations in Vietnamese education with the familiarity with group-work. This might be due to the variations in different educational settings.

With their traditions of group-work back home, the students have diverse experiences when doing group-work at JAMK. The American participant described his feelings towards group-work at JAMK with "a bit of shock" while the Vietnamese student, despite the confusion in the first year with her traditions of no group-work, is now familiar with group-work. This implies that the American participant is an exchange student, who has not had as much experience with group-work at JAMK as the Vietnamese participant as the second year degree student. In addition, studying in JAMK has provided students with little group-work experience back home valuable skills in group,

which confirms a number of prior studies regarding the same topic. For example, as cited in Cooley, Burns, Cumming (2014, 568), Prichard, Bizo, Stratford (2006) put an emphasis on " cooperation, communication, problem-solving, leadership" as regards the group-work topic. In the same opinion, the degree students interviewed have also improved their communication, collaboration skills when having group-work experience at JAMK. Furthermore, doing group-work at JAMK also prepares students for the future careers as they stated.

Expectations

Regarding the expectations of group-work, the results showed that there was a variety of interpretations on whether a group is effective or ineffective. In other words, each participant associated different elements with the success of group-work. Additionally, there are also similarities from the perspectives of the students and teachers.

To determine whether the group-work is effective or ineffective, there are a number of notable aspects the participants mentioned such as the frequency of meetings, collaboration, language barriers, issues with thinking or being laidback and the multicultural environment for students to exchange ideas. Besides, "Contribution" and was also regarded as one of the elements in identifying the success of group-work. Thus, the "free-rider" issue was stated to lead to the ineffectiveness of a group. This is analogous with Jackson (2017) who emphasized the necessity of contribution of all students in their different roles in the group. Likewise, Liu, Joy and Griffiths (2010, 2) associated an ineffective group with the "negative interdependence" or "the free-rider" with the inequality of each member's work.

Remarkably, there are a number of similarities in the students' and teachers' expectations of a successful and unsuccessful group. The goals as well as the learning outcomes were highlighted from the perspectives of both students and teachers. In detail, a group is defined as effective when attaining the goals or the productive outcome. The difference in members' goals for group-

work is a contributing factor to the ineffectiveness as stated in the discussion. The significance of goals is affirmed by Jackson (2017) attaching importance to the clarity of goals in the group when every member is on the same page with the awareness of the outcomes. Similarly, Stewart (2014, 12) contended that it is crucial that group members have the shared goals and cooperate to attain the outcome.

Learning outcomes are another point emphasized from both teachers and students' opinions. To be specific, a successful group is not only about goal achievement but also about what students learn from group-work. Facing problems in multicultural group-work can provide students with the platform for growing and learning, which has a positive effect. Thus, a successful group does not necessarily associate with the perfect results. "Learning opportunities" play a crucial role in the success of group-work. This finding concurs with How group-work can improve learning outcomes (2013) which put an emphasis on the significance of the possibilities for growth in group-work. In line with that, Chiriac (2014, 1) further pinpointed the underlying goal of group-work is an impetus for "learning".

Challenges

Throughout the literature review chapter and result chapter of this paper, the similarities of the themes regarding challenges in group-work from literature review section and result section are illustrated. The followings are summarized three main challenges points:

Lack of competence of cooperative learning and cooperative awareness: the theme of "Communication problems" in group-work are supported by the literature review as the points of the "The capabilities of English" and "Misinterpretations" (Nahkamäk n.d., 15), and the result of "Misunderstanding" and "Language issues" this paper; "The problems of English level" and "Misunderstanding" in communication are both the representative questions in communication in the study. The ability of group members can be seen as the key aspect in group-work. (Popov et al. 2012, 306.) Students' cooperative

capabilities and skills are key factors affecting their performances of group-work. The cooperative capabilities of students include students practice in verbal expressions, such as English proficiency, listening skills, problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills. According to students' statements in both student focus group discussions, in the context of JAMK University, even if a majority of students do not have any group activities back home, students are also willing to cooperate with other students in a group learning. The fact is that some of the students do not know how to work effectively with other people, they may not achieve a mutual understanding of each other or communicating clearly in group-work. Therefore, the students might lack their cooperative awareness between the group members who have just come into contact with. As well, it is difficult to be more concerned with other members' emotional experiences and their points of view for the students. Members of the group-work also remained at the level of independent learning; they did not work with each other and discussed the problems together. The main reason for the issue is that students lack the ability of self-management; they do not form into the awareness and capabilities of cooperative learning.

Imbalances of members' participation and contribution: There remain some differences in each member's participation and contribution in group-work. The themes of "Personality issues" and "Contribution of each member" discussed in focus group interviews are in accordance with some points in the literature review section, such as "the characteristics of each member" (Underwood 2003, 319), and "Free-rider" (Davies 2009, 566-567). The objective of group-work is to enable students to put themselves in the most suitable position of a group to further develop students' abilities to handle information and solving problems. There is no doubt that group-work provides the opportunities for the students to participate in activities in a group learning.

On the one hand, the Finnish and Russian participate in the focus group discussion said that some students who have strong personalities or who are outstanding dominate group-work also undertake significant responsibilities for the whole group. These students who are in leadership positions have a bigger voice in a group. On the other hand, according to Vietnamese student's

statement in the degree student discussion, group members who are relatively introverted or lack of initiative always can be good listeners; this viewpoint accords with the points of “lack of attendance and lack of engagement ” (Jones & Conway 2011, 4-5) in the literature review. This situation reveals the subordinate status of the role of those students in group-work; they tend always to observe them participate in group activities, which makes this kind of student relies on other group members to handle group tasks and loses the opportunity to think independently as well. Such dependency in group-work not only cannot solve the problem but also may affect students' the ability of independent thinking and solving problem. Besides, when evaluating members' practices and contribution in group-work, poor performance among members is their major concern instead of the best one.

Lack of cooperation among members: According to the previous study, meeting time which should fit every member can be a challenge in group-work (Jones & Conway 2011, 4-5), and the matter with attendance also is challenging (Burdett 2003, 185). It is a truth acknowledged that difficulty in group-work scheduling is a common problem, but the situation of insufficient time to work together in a group can be seen as the main issue. The American student participant in focus group discussion stressed that students did not have enough time to communicate with other group members in class, and it was difficult for them to arrange the time which could fit every member outside class. The study finds that group members have challenges learning immediately in a group after group tasks assigned by teachers in class, which not only do not achieve the purpose of group-work learning but also affect the enthusiasm of each member. The diversity of group activities and the difficulty in group-work scheduling sometimes contribute to indefinite the objectives of group-work, one-way learning and poor understanding of group tasks.

Similarities and differences in the viewpoints of improvements for group-work between students and educators

With reference to the improvements in face of the challenges, there are both similarities and differences in the students and teachers' points of view. Exploring these two dimensions provides extensive and comprehensive insights into how to handle the challenges and fosters the mutual understanding between educators and students.

Regarding the similarities, both teachers and students underlined the necessity of group-work time inside class, clear expectation and discussion. The emphasis of a specific time in class allocated for group-work may be linked with the contact challenges outside class as mentioned in the challenges chapter. It was stated to be challenging to get in touch with members outside the lesson because some students do not check school emails frequently and there might be no replies. Besides, there exists a habit of waiting for other members to contact first. Moreover, from the teacher's point of view, scheduled contact lessons give students the opportunity to have face to face discussions, which not all of students take advantage of that.

Discussion is both advocated from the educator and student's angles, the reasoning of which may be due to the absence of communication as mentioned by the participants. The lack of listening and the rejection of other members' viewpoints were regarded as impediments to group-work, which might be associated with the suggestion of student- student and teacher- student discussions for group-work improvements. However, there are some concerns that some students do not dare to talk with teachers or some are not willing to discuss in the group.

Furthermore, a clear expectation was also considered effective in overcoming obstacles in group-work. For instance, to deal with the "free-rider" problem specifically, a clear expectation should be formed in advance that "free-riders will be spotted". The importance of clear expectations may be traced back to the variety of students and teachers' own definitions and expectations of group-work. The possible rationale may be that everyone come from different backgrounds and cultures with diverse ways of thinking and viewpoints. An ineffective group for some may be considered effective for the others and vice

versa. Thus, a clear expectation is beneficial to hindering misunderstandings and confusion in group-work.

Together with the similarities, there exist the differences in the teachers and students' points of view as regards how to cope with the challenges in group-work. One of the distinctions is the viewpoints of the free-rider issue. In the interview, the students mentioned free-rider as the hurdles in group-work, expressing concerns over members who can get a high grade without doing anything. Acknowledging this issue, teachers suggested improvements such as clear expectation, individual tasks included and reflection approach. This is consistent with Jones and Conway (2011) who emphasized that the whole grade should not consist of only group-work's score. According to them, students should also give feedback to group members constructively. (5-6.) Peer-evaluation was also underscored in the reflection approach, which concurs with Tollefson (2015, 1) mentioning peer evaluation as a method for educators to measure the contributions of each individual in group-work.

Furthermore, the teachers also highlighted another outlook on the free-rider problem. The word "free-riding" may be "judgmental and loaded". If the group give trivial tasks to one because he or she is not trusted, the member might be "labelled as the free-rider". Furthermore, the free-rider problem is considered as part of students' learning when they acquire experience from failures. From another angle, there is also a critical way of thinking that fairness is not only about finding the one with faults but also acknowledging the top performers. Likewise, regarding the "free-rider" issue, Davies (2009, 563) underlined the equality in a group in which all members' efforts and contributions should be acknowledged and taken into consideration.

Another remarkable difference is students and teachers' opinions on the role of teachers in group-work support and guidance. On the students' side, it is crucial that teachers guide students how to do group-work and provide support when students turn to teachers for help. In their previous experiences, from their point of view, in some courses teachers were very supportive while in others, they witnessed that teachers did not care. It might have been due to

teachers' expectations of students' ability to deal with challenges. On the other hand, in the teachers' views, the role of teachers is to be available for help when problems arise yet not to interfere with the group. This was reflected in the "client-based approach" and the model of management "Bathtub" which were highlighted in the teacher discussion. This approach enables students to gain learning opportunities from the issues facing them in their group-work. This is in line with Chiriac (2014, 1) asserting the significance of group-work in stimulating students to learn. It may be implied that this method is connected with the "student-centered" approach which was approved by Barraket (2005, 2) who presented his research findings emphasizing its favorable impact on students' learning and experiences. Being a mediator who fixes all the matters inside the group was stated not to be effective. This teaching method was strongly emphasized when the teachers were asked about how to handle group-work challenges, especially in face of the communication problems. In other words, the method was interpreted as "strong experiential learning element" in which students are not offered guidance step by step because it is to "instruct them" and they have no learning outcomes afterwards if there are no communication problems.

This disparity may result from the misunderstanding or unclear expectations in the communication between the teachers and students. The justification may be that the approach practiced by the teachers is aimed at the students' learning process, which might be misinterpreted by the students as "not supportive". It is postulated that there should be a discussion between teachers and students to clarify the teachers' teaching approach and students' expectations for help and guidance.

6.2 New emerging themes

Some results related to the research topic provide new insights which are not directly connected to the research objectives and questions. These following new findings are summarized as five different themes, including "Forming the

groups”, “cultural impacts”, “Individual difference in members”, “Academic integrity” and “Bathtub Model”.

Forming the groups: The researchers noticed that student participants had differences of opinion on the principles for group forming. The themes of “the decisions of Group selection”, “Leadership” and “Division of neighbors” which are not included in literature review can be seen in focus group discussion. Hassaskhah and Mozaffari (2015, 1) stated that the way to form groups has an influence on the achievements of group-work. The form of group forming is based on the needs of the different curriculum and goal setting in class at JAMK. The type of group forming can also be divided into two basic forms which are teachers helping students to create groups or students create the groups on their own. The overall point of view in the student group discussions is the favor over the teacher-selected group in which group members are decided by teachers. Some students stated their tendency to find people they are familiar with when it comes to group forming. Nevertheless, they concurred with teachers arranging group members because of the opportunity to interact with new people, which enriches their experience especially in multicultural group-work and prepares for their future working life when people are unlikely to choose their own groups. This is not totally in line with the opinions of Weimer (2013). According to him, “there isn't one best way” for group forming”. What needs to be taken into account is connected to the learning outcomes teachers expect of students through their group-work. When students determine their group members, as he stated, are highly satisfied with group-work due to their avoidance of unmotivated students. Nonetheless, he agreed that students tend to choose “their friends” for group-work, which does not provide them with the interpersonal skills.

In the discussion, the teachers underlined the significance of Tuckman's model of group development. Five stages of groups were mentioned: “forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning”. As stated in the discussion, the storming phase can take the group a great deal of time for the group to deal with. This model is strongly affirmed by prior studies. In 1965, with the investigation of about 50 articles about small group development, Tuckman

introduced the group stages of development: "forming", "storming", "norming" and "performing" (1965, 420) and Tuckman and Jansen added the fifth stage: "adjourning" after revision (1977, 426). Besides, this theory was also underscored by Nestor (2013) and Mulder (2014) who elaborated on the 5 phases of a group. According to forming stage of Tuckman's group development model, members of the group tend to be in passive state at this stage (Denise 2010,113); they do not really understand the purpose of the group-work activities and related contents. Based on "there isn't one best way" for group forming" (Weimer 2013), the negative sides of the ways for group forming are to be discussed. The role of teachers at the group forming stage is to help students form the relationships with each group member. Although the number of members for the group-work or group leaders sometimes are confirmed by teachers in advance, it is easy to overlook the individual differences of students when teachers form groups. The differences could be explained by the different knowledge base of students, learning capacities, interests and personality traits. The way of teachers helping with group forming is difficult to consider the realities of students at different levels. Those differences in students' competence levels prevent them from achieving the unity of group activities, such as the communication with each other, competition among the group members, and learning assessments in group-work. When students are expected to forming groups by their own, they are likely to be working with their friends or a group of people with the same culture, which might satisfy students' dependences. Students in the division of group-work tasks and responsibilities within the group are easy to follow something blindly.

Cultural impacts: The performance of multicultural group-work is not only from the cultural backgrounds of group members. The objective of one of the sub-research questions on this study is to explore the relationship between culture and group-work. As a result, culture actually impacts on various aspects of multicultural group-work such as "Changes in the way of people behaviors", "Group dynamics". However, these results to the sub research question do not clearly show that the close relationship between the culture

and group-work. Students and teachers in focus group discussions are more inclined to express their points of view of the other factors that affect multicultural group-work excluding the cultural causes. When it comes to discussing the impacts on multicultural group-work in focus groups, participants said that some problems emerged in multicultural group-work come mainly from the differences between the cultural contexts of the group member themselves. For example, the views of the impact of Chinese students' collective benefits values (Li, Remedios & Clarke 2014, 235), Vietnamese students' passiveness in thinking in group-work or hesitation to be against others' views (Vu 2015) which are shown in literature review. These points also were confirmed in the degree students focus group discussions. From the educators' perspectives at JAMK, they think that challenges emerged reflect not only the cultural backgrounds of each student in multicultural group-work but also student's different education system and their unique university cultures back home. Different education level an impact on cognitive performance (Rosselli & Ardila 2003, 327). It appears that students' education system and university cultures are also a way to show a reflection of their own cultural background. Some of the students' performances in multicultural group-work may benefit from the extent of their own education systems influences on them. The diversity of students' learning form in a group comes from their family education, school education and social education. As a consequence, different cultures between group members have an influence on group-work, but it cannot be seen as the main factor. The student participants are not aware that their behavior changes in group-work may be from their education systems and university cultures.

Conflict style: The conflict style is another theme emerging in the teacher discussion. It was stated to relate to how students tackle group-work challenges. An example was mentioned in the interview was that Some students have a tendency to be passive while other students voice up their opinions. Each individual reacts to conflicts within the group in their own ways. This finding is advocated by previous research. Flage (2011) gave an explanation of five approaches: "Avoidance, Accommodation, Compromise,

Competition, Collaboration". In detail, "Avoidance" indicates the rejection of the existence of the issues. "Accommodation" refers to the suppression of the discrepancies inside the group to make group members be on good terms with each other. "Competition" style defines the winner and loser inside the group while the "collaboration" style focuses on problem-solving in groups. Another conflict style is "compromise" in which members figure out the agreement in between. (2.) In the same area, Trautman (2007) illustrated the effects of each conflict style on the group. For instance, "Cooperation" is a great tool to energize people and stimulate their creativity. (2.)

Bathtub Model: Besides the Tuckman's theory, another arising point in the discussion is the Bathtub Model. This model was considered as applicable when considering the role of teachers when dealing with student group-work. To be specific, the teacher is like someone in the bathroom who oversees the process and offer support if necessary without actively interfering the group. Ed Muzio, CEO of Group Harmonics supported this model and clarified that this approach is not an indication of ignorance for group-work (as presented on Leadership: The Bathtub Model 2009).

Individual difference in members: The individual difference among members which is related to the point of "the characteristics of each group member" can be seen in the literature review (Underwood 2003,319). The students also discussed the individual difference affecting group-work such as personality issue, the difference in both student's behavior and thinking ways in focus group interviews. These findings are not really connected to explore the research questions because those findings emphasize the possible causes affecting group-work performance. Researchers think that the points are also worth thinking about and exploring possible factors influencing group-work performance in the future research. JAMK is an international university in Finland, many students from different cultures and educational backgrounds, JAMK contains different cultures' fusion and collision from students under multicultural learning atmosphere. Different students in the group learning process will be different, and those differences come from the differences in their educational system, cultural background, personality differences,

differences in behavior. These differences of students also bring some difficulties to the implementation of group-work learning, which increases the complexity of group-work. Thus, the factor of “Individual differences among group members” in group-work is a point worthy of serious consideration.

Academic integrity: Although students’ academic plagiarism phenomenon in group-work has not been mentioned in the literature review, some students and teachers also pay attention to the academic integrity issues during focus group discussions. Researchers intended to take a new aspect of academic integrity account into designing research question. Because the sensitivity of the research topic of academic plagiarism, which is likely to affect the implementation of the future research and the process of data collection from responders, and therefore the theme of academic integrity did not be included in research question. Researchers also believe that the theme of academic integrity can be a good point to explore some problems in group-work.

6.3 Practical implications

First of all, the multicultural group-work learning model in learning and teaching ways not only breaks the traditional teaching method but also shows multiple dimensions of culture in multicultural group-work. In this study, exploring the strategies to tackle existing difficulties in group-work is conducive to adapting to the change in the traditional way of learning in multicultural context, and make students aware of how to work with group members from different cultural backgrounds. Thereby further the cultivation of cooperative ability and attitude for students.

From the perspectives of educational institutions, teachers can further enhance and cultivate cooperative consciousness and cooperation ability, optimize the way of learning and teaching adjustment mechanism by guiding in the teaching practices to make the students realize their weaknesses and strengths in the process of learning in groups.

From the student's point of view, students possess a sensitivity to the cultural differences in multicultural group-work, and their own cultural awareness, the

recognition of the differences in culture have an impact on student's behavior in group-work (Li 2013, 6). The communication among group members from different cultural contexts stimulates their interests and initiative to improve the students' independent learning capabilities and learn how to get along with people from different cultures in the process of learning. Therefore, this exploratory study on multicultural group-work has a profound practical significance for the future research and work.

7 CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to explore how to react to group-work challenges in the multicultural context. To fulfil this aim, the main research question has been devised: What are strategies to respond to group-work challenges in multicultural context at a higher education institution? JAMK University of Applied Sciences is chosen as the case study for this study. Three sub-questions are: What are the traditions of group-work back home for higher education students? What are the cultural impacts on group-work at JAMK? and How should teachers and students cope with group-work challenges at JAMK?

Summary of the main findings

In summary, there is a diversity of the traditions of group-work in different cultures in which the participants practice group-work to various degrees: little, to a certain amount or frequently. Bringing along their group-work traditions, studying at JAMK brings them diverse experiences when doing group-work at JAMK. Overall, group-work experience at JAMK has provided vital and essential skills for students and even prepare for their future careers. Furthermore, the participants have a variety of expectations to determine whether a group is effective or not. They associate different elements with the success of group-work such as frequency of meetings, collaboration, language barriers, issues with thinking or being laidback and the multicultural environment for students to exchange ideas. A remarkable point is that both

the teachers and students attach importance to the goals and learning outcomes with regard to their interpretations of a successful group.

In addition, the findings also reveal the obstacles students encounter in group-work and cultural impacts on group-work. Lack of competence of cooperative learning and cooperative awareness are the main challenges in multicultural group-work, and imbalances of group members' contribution is also a focus problem. Most students prefer teachers to help them form groups in class. Three primary aspects of the impact of culture on multicultural group-work are: speaking way changes, thinking ways changes and automatically bringing a reflection of students' cultures into multicultural group-work. The challenges and difficulties involved in multicultural group-work are determined not only by the cultural differences between the members themselves, but also by the different education systems across work group members at JAMK.

In face of the challenges, it is notable that the findings show similarities and differences in the viewpoints of the improvements for group-work between the educators and students, which provides a deeper investigation into how to handle the challenges, foster the mutual understanding and impede confusion or misinterpretation. The improvements for "free-rider" issue, teachers' guidance and support and the client-based teaching approach with experiential learning outcomes are some of the notable aspects in the discussion. In addition, there are new themes emerging from the findings which offer new insights into the research topic such as group forming, cultural impacts, conflict style, Bathtub Model, individual difference in members and academic integrity.

Limitations

In preparation for the research, efforts were made to gain a sufficient number of attendants by carefully sending invitation emails and arranging the appropriate time slots for every one. Nonetheless, it was not easy to gather the expected attendants due to their conflicting schedules, which required the researchers to make essential arrangements and changes in the number of participants. Another limitation of this research is that the language. There

were not many English sources on the traditions of group-work in different cultures. Furthermore, the process was implemented in English as the common means of communication since most of the respondents use English as a second language (ESL). Thus, there might have been misinterpretation in the questions as well as the answers. Nevertheless, the researchers took the questions and results into thorough and detailed consideration with the support and advice from the supervisor.

Recommendations and suggestions for future research

The findings illustrate that besides a number of shared perspectives, there is a variety of angles from which the students and teachers approach the topic. Moreover, students have different experience in traditions of group-work in their home countries, and each individual has their own expectations of the success of group-work. Hence, it is highly recommended that there should be in-depth open discussions among students and teachers with a view to providing the platform for sharing viewpoints, reinforcing mutual understanding and hindering possible confusion and misapprehension. Seminars, workshops or training courses are also advisable to strengthen the competences and capabilities of doing group-work.

It is proposed that future studies could be conducted with a larger sample size to stimulate more perspectives from diverse cultural groups. It would be of great use to obtain more literature available in other languages besides English with the support of translation especially for the sources on traditions of group-work in different cultures. Furthermore, the new emerging themes such as group forming, cultural impacts, conflict style, Bathtub Model, individual difference in members and academic integrity could open possibilities for further research so that the topic could be examined thoroughly and extensively. This study is carried out in the hope of leveraging the awareness of the JAMK environment, providing opportunities for exploring the topic group-work challenges and improvements in the multicultural context and encouraging new emerging themes for further consideration and investigation. The present research is regarded as the foundations for more comprehensive studies to be undertaken in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questions for student group discussions

(For both degree students and exchange students)

This part is an introduction of participant's cultural background

1. What nationality are you? Are you an exchange or degree student? What do you study in JAMK? Which year are you?

To explore traditions of group-work

2. How often do you have group-work in your country? (only for exchange students) How does group-work operate in your country? (for degree students)

This part is to explore group-work in multicultural context

3. Did you find anything new and interesting about group-work when you get here (at JAMK)?

To ask about expectations of multicultural group-work

4. How do you describe an effective and successful / ineffective and unsuccessful multicultural group?

Comparing those two different experiences, and find challenges in group-work

5. Do you face any challenges in multicultural group-work at JAMK? Do you think multi-cultures are one of the challenges? Can you share a previous experience of challenges in multicultural group-work? What kind of situation do conflicts usually occur?

To explore Advantages of multicultural group-work

6. Do you think multi-cultures have positive impacts on group-work? If yes, can you tell what they are?

Explore Group-work Improvements

7. In your previous experience you have shared, how did the group and your teachers deal with the challenges?

8. In the face of challenges in multicultural group-work, what should students do and how should teachers help with it?

9. From a student's perspective, could you recommend any tips to improve multicultural group-work?

Appendix 2. Questions for teacher group discussion

Teacher's background

1. Could you please give us a brief introduction about your cultural background and teaching experience at JAMK?

To ask about expectations of multicultural group-work

2. Do you think what successful and unsuccessful multicultural group is?

Finding challenges in group-work

3. In your opinion, what challenges do students usually face in multicultural group-work at JAMK?

4. Can you share your previous experiences when you noticed challenges students faced in multicultural group-work?

5. Do you think multi-culture can be one of the challenges in group-work?

Explore Group-work Improvements

6. In your previous experience you have shared, how did the group and teachers deal with the challenges?

7. Some students met some free riders when working in a group, how do teachers deal with it?

8. How do teachers deal with communication challenges among students in multicultural group-work? Such as language barriers, difficulties with contact, inadequate communication

9. In what kind of situation should teachers help students form a group or let students form a group on their own?

10. In the face of challenges in multicultural group-work, what should students do and how should teachers help with it?

Appendix 3. Summary of World Output

(International Monetary Fund 2016b, 168)

Table A1. Summary of World Output¹
(Annual percent change)

	Average									Projections		
	1998–2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2021
World	4.2	3.0	-0.1	5.4	4.2	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.9
Advanced Economies	2.8	0.2	-3.4	3.1	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.8
United States	3.0	-0.3	-2.8	2.5	1.6	2.2	1.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.0
Euro Area	2.4	0.5	-4.5	2.1	1.6	-0.9	-0.3	0.9	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5
Japan	1.0	-1.0	-5.5	4.7	-0.5	1.7	1.4	0.0	0.5	0.5	-0.1	0.7
Other Advanced Economies ²	3.6	1.1	-2.0	4.5	3.0	1.9	2.3	2.8	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.4
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	5.8	5.8	3.0	7.4	6.3	5.3	4.9	4.6	4.0	4.1	4.6	5.1
Regional Groups												
Commonwealth of Independent States ³	6.2	5.3	-6.4	4.6	4.8	3.5	2.1	1.1	-2.8	-1.1	1.3	2.4
Emerging and Developing Asia	7.6	7.2	7.5	9.6	7.8	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.4
Emerging and Developing Europe	4.2	3.1	-3.0	4.7	5.4	1.2	2.8	2.8	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.1	3.9	-1.2	6.1	4.9	3.2	3.0	1.3	-0.1	-0.5	1.5	2.8
Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan	5.3	4.8	1.5	4.9	4.5	5.0	2.3	2.8	2.5	3.1	3.5	3.8
Middle East and North Africa	5.3	4.8	1.5	5.2	4.6	5.1	2.1	2.6	2.3	2.9	3.3	3.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.3	6.0	4.0	6.6	5.0	4.3	5.2	5.1	3.4	3.0	4.0	5.0
Memorandum												
European Union	2.7	0.7	-4.3	2.0	1.8	-0.4	0.3	1.4	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.8
Low-Income Developing Countries	6.1	5.9	5.9	7.1	5.3	5.2	6.1	6.1	4.5	4.7	5.5	5.8
Analytical Groups												
By Source of Export Earnings												
Fuel	5.6	5.1	-1.4	5.1	5.0	4.8	2.5	2.4	0.1	0.8	2.1	2.8
Nonfuel	5.9	6.0	4.3	8.1	6.6	5.4	5.6	5.2	5.0	4.9	5.2	5.6
Of Which, Primary Products	3.8	3.8	1.0	6.5	5.6	3.1	4.0	2.5	2.4	1.4	2.9	3.6
By External Financing Source												
Net Debtor Economies	4.7	4.4	2.1	6.8	5.1	4.2	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.9	4.6	5.3
Net Debtor Economies by Debt-Servicing Experience												
Economies with Arrears and/or Rescheduling during 2010–14	5.7	5.3	-0.4	3.6	3.1	1.9	2.3	0.9	1.0	2.4	3.2	4.5
Memorandum												
Median Growth Rate												
Advanced Economies	3.5	0.8	-3.8	2.3	2.0	1.1	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.1
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	4.6	5.0	1.7	4.5	4.5	4.1	4.0	3.7	3.0	3.2	3.5	4.0
Low-Income Developing Countries	4.7	5.6	3.9	6.2	5.8	5.2	5.4	5.3	4.0	4.4	4.8	5.4
Output per Capita												
Advanced Economies	2.1	-0.6	-4.0	2.5	1.2	0.7	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	4.4	4.2	1.8	6.3	5.1	4.0	3.8	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.6	4.1
Low-Income Developing Countries	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.9	4.1	2.9	4.0	4.0	2.5	2.6	3.5	3.9
World Growth Rate Based on Market Exchange Rates	3.1	1.5	-2.0	4.1	3.0	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.9	3.1
Value of World Output (billions of U.S. dollars)												
At Market Exchange Rates	40,305	63,268	59,921	65,571	72,681	74,186	75,905	77,825	73,171	73,994	77,779	96,387
At Purchasing Power Parities	58,506	83,014	83,351	88,830	94,337	99,089	103,919	109,143	113,524	118,170	123,973	155,752

¹Real GDP.

²Excludes the United States, euro area countries, and Japan.

³Georgia, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine, which are not members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, are included in this group for reasons of geography and similarity in economic structure.

FIGURES

Figure 1. The structure of the thesis

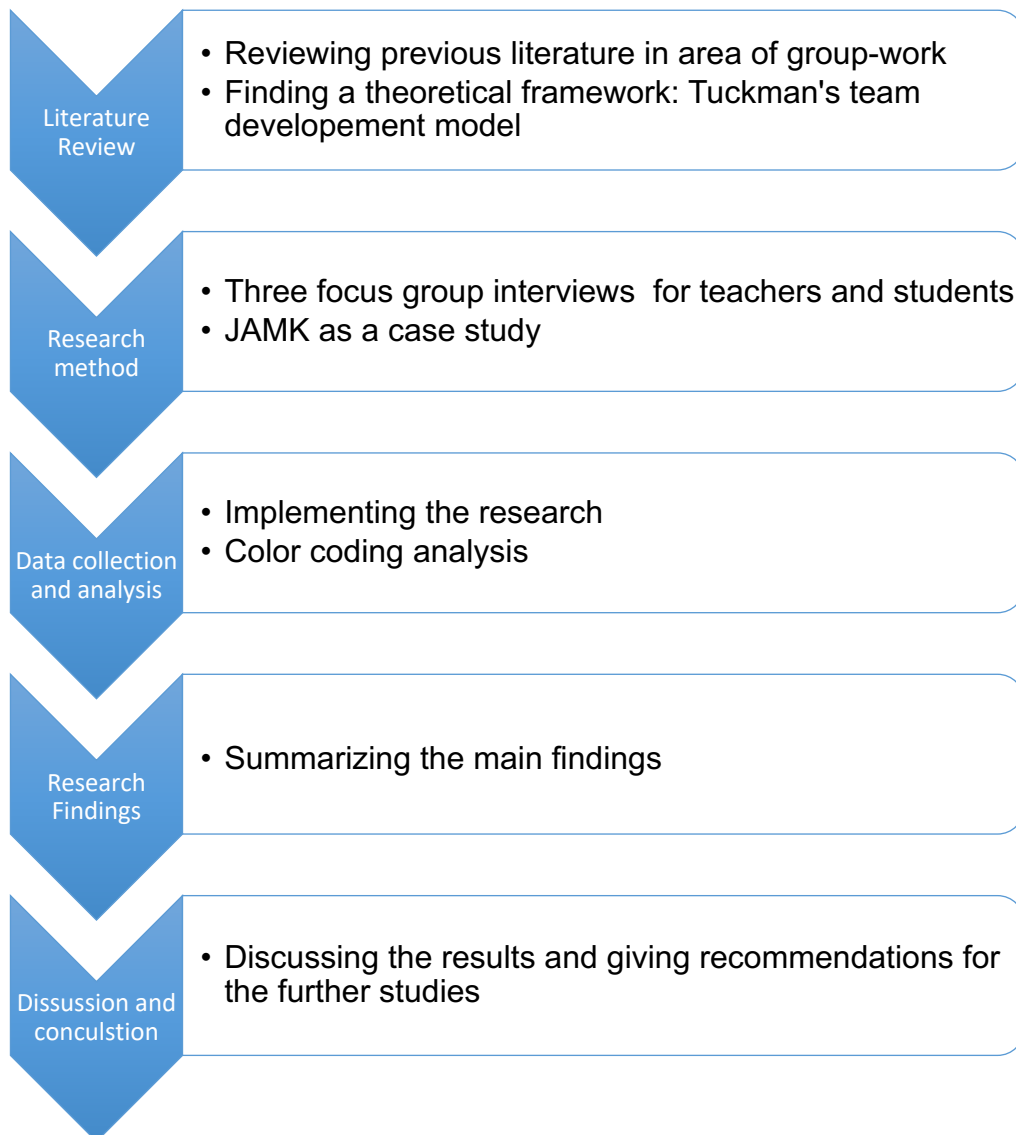


Figure 2. Tuckman's five stage model of small group development (1977)

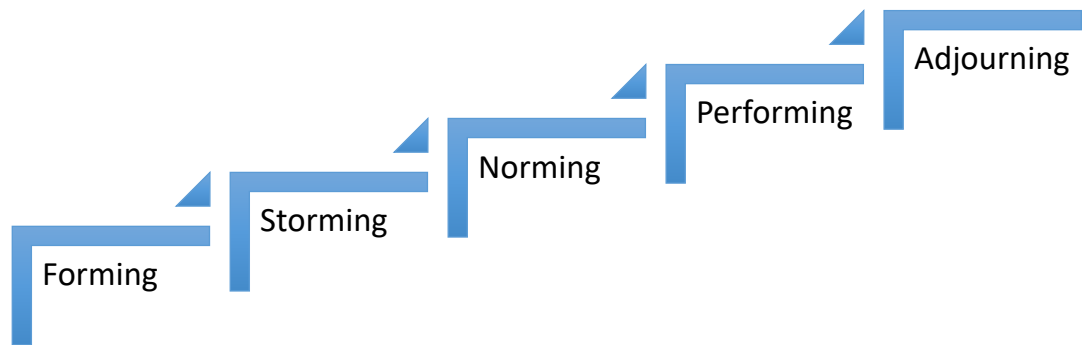


Figure 3. Tuckman's stages of group development (Mulder 2014)

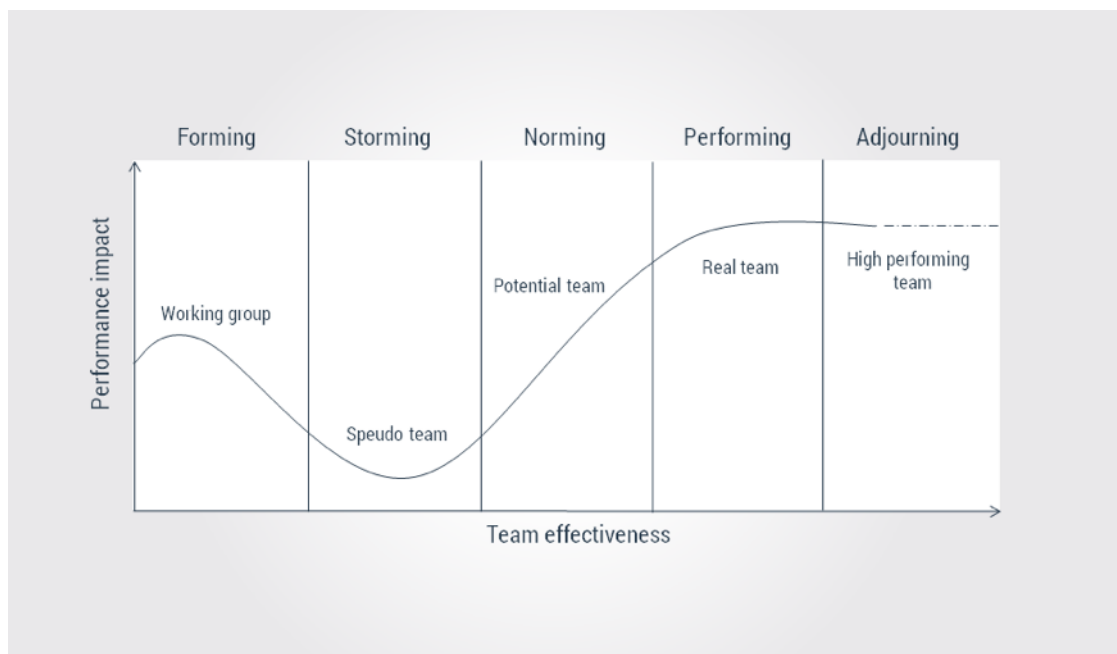


Figure 4. The research onion (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2008, cited in Saunders et al., 2009, 108)

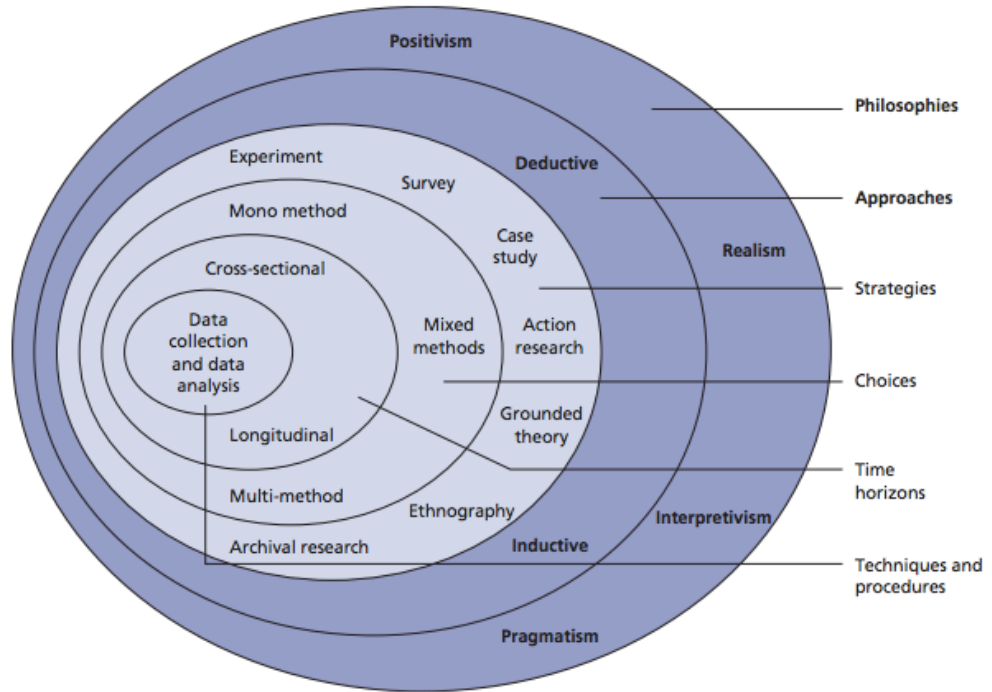


Figure 5. Interview process cycle overview

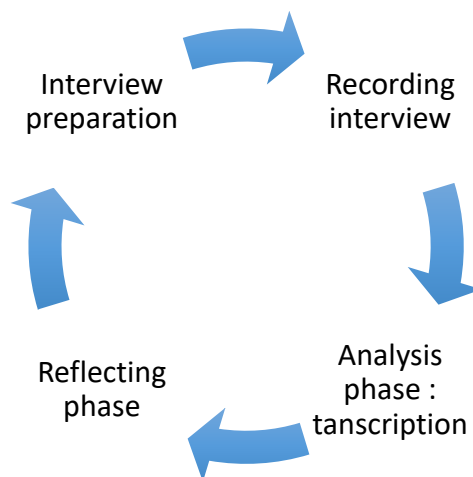


Figure 6. Three types of focus groups in order of the process

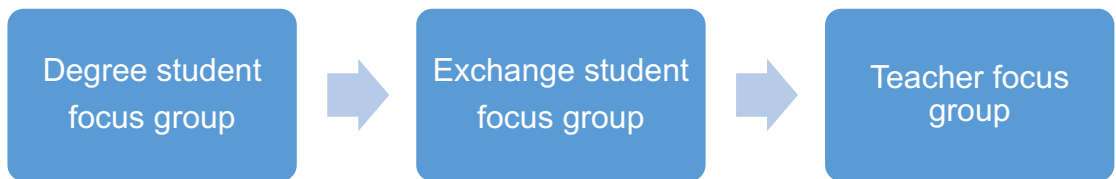


Figure 7. Types of sampling in a research

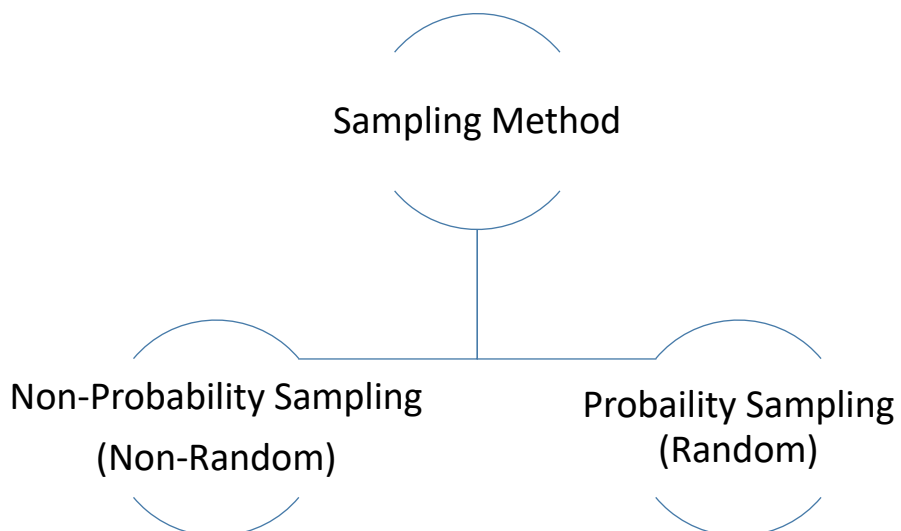


Figure 8. Focus group interview schedule overview

	Focus group 1	Focus group 2	Focus group 3
Sample types	1 st year, 2 nd year and 3 rd year Degree students in International Business at JAMK	Exchange students at JAMK	Teachers at JAMK
Nationality and gender of participants	<p>One 2nd year Russian female: 2ndDS_RUS(f)</p> <p>One 1st year Chinese female: 1stDS_CN(f)</p> <p>One 2nd year Vietnamese female: 2ndDS_VN(f)</p> <p>One 2nd year Finnish female: 2ndDS_FIN(f)</p> <p>One 3rd year Indian male: 3rdDS_IND(m)</p>	<p>One Japanese female: ES_JPN(f)</p> <p>One American male: ES_USA(m)</p> <p>One French female: ES_FRA(f)</p>	<p>One Finnish male: T_F(m)</p> <p>One American male: T_A(m)</p> <p>One American Female: T_A(f)</p>
Sample sizes	5	3	3
Date	2017.03.21	2017.03.29	2017.04.05
Duration	47mins	25mins	64mins

Figure 9. Traditions of group-work experience in different cultures

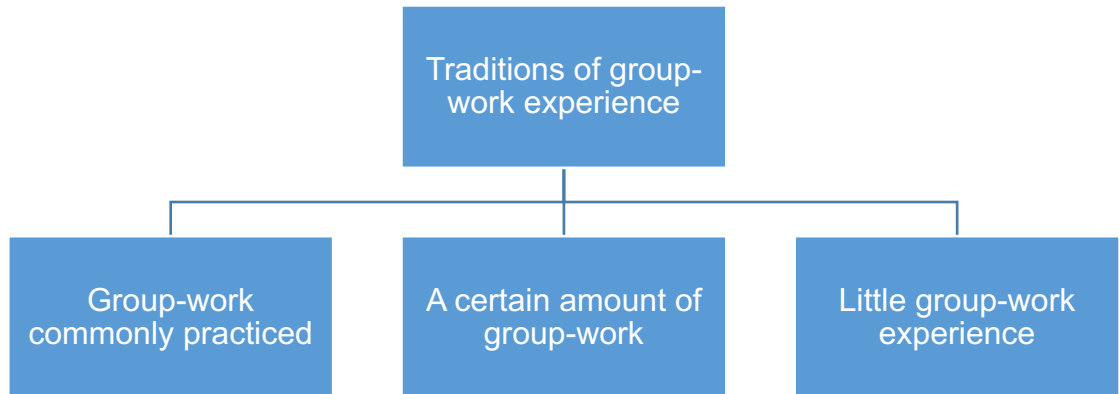


Figure 10. Three aspects of language issues

