A Study on Experiences of Cultural Diversity Education in Vietnam

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Abstract: This study used qualitative method to clarify the experiences of Vietnamese people on cultural diversity education. Transnational migration becomes frequent as shown in the increasing of Vietnamese immigrants to South Korea nowadays. Therefore, for South Korea, radical understanding of Vietnam is necessary in order to respond to the changes in Korean society. Vietnam is consisting of various ethnic groups and then it has cultural diversity. This study aims to clarify the characteristics of cultural diversity education in Vietnam. Moreover, it provides suggestions for multicultural education in South Korea in which the society has become multicultural.

Key word: Vietnam, cultural diversity, cultural diversity education, cultural elements, multicultural mentorship

I. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to verify the characteristics of Vietnamese cultural diversity education through laypeople who experienced it. Research problem is "what characteristic of cultural diversity education in Vietnam is?"

In term of the number of immigrants, Vietnamese multicultural family members occupy the second place in Korea (Statistics Korea). Both South Korea and Vietnam share the historical experiences of colonialism. Moreover, South Korea and Vietnam have traditionally been under the influence of Confucianism. However, South Korea remains as homogeneous ethnic nation while Vietnam is considered as a multi-ethnic nation.

On the other hand, with the increasing of foreign residents in South Korea from the 1990s, the nation is no longer as ethnically homogeneous as it used to be. Therefore, the study on the societies handling multicultural phenomena is necessity, in order to understand the phenomena occurring in South Korean society nowadays. Consequently, the studies that focus on multicultural education

oversea are dynamically conducted. However, most of these studies clarify the cases which are less related to Korea society, such as United State and Europe. Few studies focus on Asian countries, which relate more to Korean multicultural phenomena, are conducted recently. However, most of these focus about China alone. Keeping in mind this limitation, this study aims to clarify the characteristic of Vietnamese cultural diversity education.

Research participants in this study are six laypersons who experienced Vietnamese general education. All of them experienced 12 years of general education in Vietnam. Besides, they are ethnic majority accounted for 86% of Vietnamese population of 54 ethnic groups. This study clarifies the experiences of these laypeople on minority culture and cultural diversity. It provides understanding of the characteristic and effects of Vietnamese education to ordinary people. In addition, this study is expected to give important implications for multicultural education in Korea.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Cultural diversity and Ethnics in Vietnam

Nowadays, cultural diversity education receives many attractions due to the development of information and communication and of transnational migration. Regarding this, UNESCO presented Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the 33rd session of General Conference in Paris in 2005. By the Convention, UNESCO clarifies the definition for cultural diversity and its principles (UNESCO, 2005). This definition of cultural diversity was defined in Article 4 of the Convention as below.

"Cultural diversity" refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies (UNESCO, 2005).

Appeared in this definition are the characteristic, subject and method of cultural diversity. In other words, the subject clarified in this definition is all of individuals and groups that configure communities and societies. Moreover, through this definition we can figure out the complementarity character of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is ensured through variety of cultural expressions appearing. In definition above, cultural diversity defined as the source enabling existence and development of community and society. In Vietnam, cultural diversity is the element attributed to ethnic diversity.

Vietnam consists of 54 ethnic groups. The government was officially clarified that 54 ethnic groups reside in the nation from 1979 until now (Hoàng, Phạm, 2012: 35). For all ethnic groups in Vietnam, the natural environment in which they live is the foundation of their lifestyle. The natural environment contributes to the cultural diversity of the country. However, some Vietnamese researchers such as Đặng (2003) and Bùi (2012) define "ethnic" as a community that shares certain coexistence territory, government, sovereignty, language, economic activity and cultural characteristics (as cited in Trần, 2015). Defining 54 ethnic as one unified group of people like this can lead to disregarding of characteristics of each ethnic. Characteristics of one ethnic are usually identified through their people or their cultural elements.

Stalin and Grosby define basis elements of ethnic from the objective perspective (천정웅 et al., 2015). According to the perspective, the elements such as kinship, regionalism, language, religions, political policy, economic, and historical destiny exist at the core of one ethnic. Besides, Vietnamese researchers define cultural diversity as the diversity of ethnic origins (Nguyễn, 1995: 14), linguages (Hoàng, Phạm, 2012: 35), population distribution (Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, 2010: 134-225; Hoàng, Phạm, 2012: 36), economic and religions (Hoàng, Phạm, 2012: 39). Moreover, Kim et al. (2013) divided the cultural elements of Vietnamese ethnics into language and history, cultural space, religions and beliefs, traditional art.

2. *Cultural diversity education and policies in Vietnam*

Vietnam consists of 54 ethnic groups. Among them, Kinh, which accounted for 85.7 percent, is the ethnic majority while the rest of 53 ethnic groups are accounted for 14.3 percent of total population of the nation. The government supports ethnic minorities and their cultural diversity by educational policies from 1959 to 2013, as shown in the Constitution. Because, the government recognizes that protecting individual culture and cultural diversity have great influence on the national development (Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2013).

Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2013) Chapter 3 Article 61 Section 1 emphasizes that education development should be at the core of the nation's policies in order to improve intellect, develop human resources and train talented individuals. In addition, the government put a lot of effort to support for the education of ethnic minorities living in poor educational environment and living conditions. For example, in 2015, Vietnam government invested 20 percent of total national budget expenditure for education. The cultural diversity education policies are one of effort made by the government pursues the principle of "Diversity in Unity". Looking through the characteristics of cultural diversity education in Vietnam that is defined by Đinh (2001: 22), the main targets for educational support are ethnic minorities. Also, educational support has been

done extensively through the wide range of not only individuals and schools, but also the whole society.

Kim et al. (2016) clarify that the diversity education policy-making process in Vietnam is systematic. To be more specific, this process is involved 3 stages. First, experts in the field of culture collect field data, analysis and report to the government. Second, the government makes final decisions about the policies. Third, the government reflects these decisions through policies established. The cultural elements, which are defined by these cultural experts, are similar with the elements mentioned by Kim et al. (2013). However, it was clarified that the characteristics of culture of ethnic minorities are defined differently by experts depended on their ethnical origin. Moreover, the verification of the policies' effects, since direction and content of the policy usually decided by the council which mostly consist of ethnic majorities rather than minorities.

Their contention seems to be appropriated in consider with the complementary of cultural diversity defined by UNESCO above. The perspectives and attitudes toward 'Other' determine the direction and results of the policies. For example, in the study on Vietnamese students living in South Korea, Kim et al. (2016) judge that the supports from South Korean universities for Vietnamese students are concentrated on physical aspect alone, while ignoring emotional one. In order to solve this problem, these supports should be done through interactive relation, such as mentorship program.

Schäffter (1991) defines 4 types of the interrelationship between 'Ours' and 'The Strangeness', included the strangeness happening naturally, the strangeness contrasting with our ethnic's culture, the strangeness as the complemented element of our culture, the interacted strangeness. These interrelationships occur overlapped rather than sequentially (Oh & Kim, 2015). This study clarifies the characteristic of Vietnamese cultural diversity education which has been comprehensively and simultaneously formed. This study also explores the results of cultural diversity education based on the statement provided by the laypeople experienced Vietnamese general education system.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Outline of Research Method

In this study, the qualitative method of case study was used in order to analyse the experiences of Vietnamese cultural diversity education of six laypeople. Case study method tends to explore the issue based on cases by conducting field work (Creswell, 2007). This study aims to clarify the characteristics of Vietnamese cultural diversity education through these cases.

2. Research Participants

The research participants are six laypeople who experienced Vietnamese education system. They were selected through snowball sampling method. The researcher was introduced by acquaintances to six people finishing general education in Vietnam. We selected only ethnic majorities (Kinh) as research participants in order to clarify their knowledges of ethnic minorities. The information of research participants is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Participants

Par-tici-pant	Educa-tional Back-ground	Age	Sex	Major	History of Migration	History of Migration
A	Attending university	23	M	Medical	Nghe An - Hanoi	After graduating from high school
B	Graduated from university	22	F	Law	Nam Dinh - Hanoi	After graduating from high school
C	Graduated from university	24	F	Law	Bac Giang - Hanoi	While attending high school
D	Graduated from high school	21	F	Language (Korean)	Hai Duong – Hanoi - Incheon	After graduating from high school
E	Attending Graduate	24	F	Physical	Ho Chi Minh -	After graduating

	school				Incheon	from university
F	Attending Graduate school	21	M	Korean Studies	Quang Ninh – Hanoi - Seoul	After graduating from high school

All research participants shown in Table 1 have experiences of national or transnational migration. The common between these people is that they all experienced Vietnamese general education spanning 5 years of elementary school, 4 years of middle school and 3 years of high school. However, their periods of migration and places of birth are different.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study was conducted using qualitative research method. It collects data through in-depth interview. The data was collected from February to July, 2015. Each research participant is interviewed in at least 3 hours. Interviews were conducted in semi-structure focusing on Vietnamese cultural diversity. The questions included 3 contents including "Focused Life History", "The Detail of Experience", "Reflection on the meaning" (Seidman, 2006). The interviews were recorded and notes were taken with the agreement of the research participants. Then, we used an analytical framework according to the perspectives of 'Strangeness' (PoS) and the support level for cultural diversity education (SLC) in Vietnam, as below.

Table 2. Analytical framework: Perspectives and Supports Level for Cultural Diversity Education in Vietnam

SLC / PoS	*Individual level*	*School level*	*Social level*
Attrac-tion	Individual experiences of minority culture	Attitudes and education of minority cultures	Social attention and efforts for minority cultures (Without general education)
Opposi-tion	Individual experiences of discrimination on minority cultures	Attitudes and education focus on discrimination on minority cultures	Attention and efforts to reduce discrimination on minority cultures
Supple-ment	Identifying minority cultures as supplemented element for majority cultures	Attitudes and education that identified minority cultures as supplemented element for majority cultures	Attention and efforts to identify minority cultures as supplemented element for majority cultures
Comple-ment	Encouraging minority cultures, recognizing minority cultures as conditions of understanding majority cultures	Education that reflected characteristics of minority cultures, creating good conditions for understanding majority cultures	Social attention and efforts for encouraging minority cultures and creating good conditions for understanding majority cultures

Table 2 above was based on the cultural diversity elements, which is defined by Kim et al. (2013), such as language and history, cultural space, lifestyle, religions and beliefs, traditional art. The cultural diversity elements defined by Vietnamese experts were included in this table (Le et al., 2016). Table 3 shows the result of re-categorization and signification of the contents in Table 2.

Table 3. Experiences of Vietnamese cultural diversity education

Common theme	Subtheme	Meaning of theme
Understanding of general education through personal experience	Elements of "Oppositional origin" appeared in general education	The curriculum focusing on cultural spaces through Geography textbook
		Carelessness of lifestyle as "different reality"
	Supplement according to personal experience	Different perspective of language based on migrant experience, different perspective of customs and religion based on personal relationships
		Sustained carelessness of minority history, favorable impression of traditional arts
	Effort for understanding outside of general education	The need of understanding for personal occupation
		Effort to understanding

As shown in Table 3, through general education, the participants in this study identified the cultures of ethnic minorities as "another reality" that they have never seen in their own cultures. However, their perception changes when they make contact with ethnic minorities outside of general school. Then, these laypeople experience several living spaces. They acknowledge the need to understand the cultures of minorities. However, it is depended on each participant because they experience differently in relation with their jobs after general education. Therefore, this study analyses the experiences of laypeople of Vietnamese cultural diversity education.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Elements of "Oppositional origin" appeared in general education

1.1. The curriculum focusing on cultural spaces through Geography textbook:

The contents of cultural diversity in Vietnamese general education are mostly presented in Geography textbook and through teachers alone.

Geography is the subject which teaches us the most (about different cultures) (ellipsis). However, I think it is not much… still not very much. (F, 2015.6.19.)
As I remember, there was a story like this. A teacher goes to an unfamiliar area where ethnic minorities live. Then, she is given some foods from

these minorities. But she was scared to eat that. (D, 2015.6.29.)

However, the contents of Geography, which focus on cultural spaces, are considered to be not enough. Furthermore, teacher explained cultural diversity by their personal experiences. This rather makes student being scared of the cultures of ethnic minorities.

1.2 Carelessness of lifestyle as "different reality":

After general education, research participants in this study think that the cultures of ethnic minorities are totally different with theirs. Therefore, these cultures are considered to be strange or inconvenient by laypeople.

I thought ethnic minorities is totally different with us. Because, as I see them in some pictures, they wear colourful clothes which contain strange patterns. It looks really uncomfortable. (D, 2015.6.29.)

(Vietnamese) students do not like studying other subjects (which are not included in entrance exam) hard. Those who study "science subjects" (which is preferred to Maths, Physical, Chemistry, etc.) do not care much about the subjects such as History or Geography. (A, 2015.7.6.)

The subjects, which are not included in the National College Admission Exam, are not received attention from students. In this reality, the diversity of minority cultures is usually out attention of Vietnamese students.

2. Supplement according to personal experience

Research participants experienced the similar content of cultural diversity in general education. However, they experienced differently outside school.

2.1. Perspective of customs and religion based on personal relationships:

Each participant experiences minority ethnic's culture differently, mostly depends on their relationship with the minority ethnic people whom they interact with. Participant D shows his negative perception of minority ethnic's folk beliefs as below.

That minority ethnic girl told me how she made charms. She said that to make charms, she had to sacrifice many things (such as her own life). (D, 2015.6.29.)

In contrast with participant D, participant E is attracted by unfamiliar religion and urges to full fill with this knowledge of religions.

Uhm, it is so amazed me to know that there is also Islamic existing in our country (ellipsis). They (Muslims) have their own ceremonies, and they would be really interesting [smile]. (E, 2015.6.23.)

When I visited my (ethnic minority) friend's house, I recognized that the traffic there was quite poor… (ellipsis). At that time, I was able to understand more about the life of minority ethnic people who live in the area. (C, 2015.6.29.)

We can find out the reason for the difference between D's and E's perspectives through participant C. Through closed friendship with her minority ethnic friend, C did not only overcome the physically unpleasant environment in living area of ethnic minorities, but also able to understand deeply the culture of ethnic minorities.

2.2. Attraction on traditional arts, carelessness of history:

Ethnic minorities also have their personal experiences of cultural diversity. Participant F finds ethnic minorities' traditional art attractive when he observes his ethnic minority friend maintains and develops ethnic traditional art.

Uhm, about the minority ethnic people that I have met, uhm… (ellipsis). He can perform his ethnic's traditional art, uhm… He can perform minority ethnic's traditional flute called "khèn". (F, 2015.6.19.)

Conversely, A's girlfriend seems to not have interest in the changes of her ethnical community or historical reality related to her ethnic.

My girlfriend does not know much about her own ethnic. She has not visited the area that her ethnic group living, so she couldn't tell me much about the things happened there. (A, 2015.7.6.)

The girlfriend, who is minority ethnic people, can be seen as an important factor among A's kinship. Her attitude toward her own ethnic group contributes to A's perspectives. A did not show any particular interest in the history of various ethnic groups.

3. Effort for understanding outside of general education

After general education, research participants mostly experience cultural diversity in direct or indirect ways.

3.1. The need of understanding for personal occupation:

For participants in this research, the scopes and levels of interest in cultural diversity are depended on migrant experiences. E thinks thoroughly about language as a tool for communication while experiencing foreign student life in Korea.

Uhm, other ethnic minorities… They also learn Kinh language… (ellipsis). So, I think that they could deal with more difficulty than us… (ellipsis). We have been Kinh since we were born. We naturally use the language. (E, 2015.6.23.)

Ethnic minorities' tradition… Uhm, it will be great if their tradition is maintained. For example, the cultures such as language or clothes… these are important for attracting tourist and developing tourism. Uhm, and as I know, the tour of exploring culture is really interesting. (F, 2015.6.19.)

Rather than that, F thinks that the tradition of ethnic minorities in Vietnam is one of the elements contributing to Vietnamese culture. He also thinks the diversity of Vietnamese culture attracts foreign tourism to Vietnam.

3.2. The effort for understanding

Law school student B and Medical school student A need to understand different cultures due to their jobs.

Uhm, when I travel to somewhere… (ellipsis). Although living in Hanoi, I would never go for those things (exhibitions)… Maybe I would not do that [laugh]. (B, 2015.7.2.)

Uhm, yes, now I attend graduated shool. I study some subjects related to my major only. Uhm, now I am… I usually use my time to study, concentrating on study all the time. I do not do anything rather than that. (A, 2015.7.6.)

As shown in the statements of B and A above, now they do not build the connection between their majors and knowledges of cultural diversity. In contrast, the social supports seem to be not enough for the participants willing to understand cultural diversity more.

Mostly, if I am curious about other cultures, I will search for it on Google or Wikipedia. There are lots of information there. And also, there are quite

a lot of information on other media such as television. (F, 2015.6.19.)

Sometimes, I change TV channel and I accidently see scenes of ethnic minorities. It looks a little interesting so I stop for a few minutes to watch them. (B, 2015.7.2.)

F and B access easily to a variety of information of ethnic minorities through media such as internet or television. However, as shown in B's statement, these types of accession only provide temporary and fragmentary knowledges for viewers.

V. CONCLUSION

This study clarifies the characteristics of cultural diversity education guaranteed by the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The study was conducted through interviews with six research participants who experienced Vietnamese general education. They experienced Vietnamese cultural diversity education in individual level, school level and social level. Their experiences of cultural diversity education were collected and categorized into contents related to cultural diversity. Finally, three sub-themes and six meanings of theme were conducted. The characteristics of Vietnamese cultural diversity education were indicated as below.

First, the culture of ethnic minorities, as mainly shown in Geography, is extraneous and astonish. Therefore, it is difficult to keep the interest from majority students.

Second, participants change or maintain their perspectives through meeting with ethnic minorities while attending general education. In particular, the knowledges about their own ethnic of the ethnic minorities in relation with participants are especially important for developing positive perspective of cultural diversity.

Third, after general education, laypeople frequently encounter with other cultures, due to the extension of their life spheres. Therefore, understanding of cultural diversity increasingly required. However, this depends on the job of each participant. It seems to lack of the social supports for cultural diversity education.

Like this, there are efforts to achieve cultural diversity education in Vietnam by making policy guaranteed by the Constitution. However, the result is not really effective. The implications for cultural diversity in Vietnam and multicultural education in South Korea is listed as below.

First, the dimension of multicultural education must be at school level rather than at individual level or social level. Because the perspectives of cultural diversity at individual level and social level depends on its situation and context. Therefore, multicultural education in South Korea must be done mostly at school level.

Second, education for the children in multicultural family should be done in mentorship program in which marriage immigrant women, who have high knowledge about their original culture, take part in as the mentors.

Third, the cultural diversity education should be continued after general education. Training courses on cultural diversity should be hold at higher education institutes to improve the understanding of students. Due to the economic development, the humanities and social sciences in South Korea is reduced at higher education institutes from 2016. However, this reduction might lead to the increasing of problems when dealing with cultural diversity nowadays.

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